

AN ANTHOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY IN PERSIA, VOL 5:

FROM THE SCHOOL OF SHIRAZ TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



EDITED BY S. H. NASR & M. AMINRAZAVI

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An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia

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An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia

VOLUME 5

From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

and

MEHDI AMINRAZAVI

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صورتی در زیر دارد آنچه در بالا است چرخ با این اختران نغز و خوش و زیباست
صورت زیرین اگر باز در بان معرفت بر رود بالا همان با اصل خود یکتا است

Whatever exists above, has a form below.
Heaven with these stars is clear, pleasing and beautiful.
The form below, if the ladder of gnosis
is upward trodden, with its principle becomes one.

Mīr Findiriskī

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- Ḥājjī Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, tr. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutzu as *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī*. Delmar, NY, 1977.
- Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*, tr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr as *Metaphysical Penetrations*. Provo, UT, 2013.

Note on Transliteration

Arabic characters

ء	’
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w
ي	y
ة	ah; at (construct state)

long vowels

ا	ā
و	ū
ي	ī

short vowels

ـَ	a
ـُ	u
ـِ	i

diphthongs

ـَو	aw
ـَي	ai (ay)
ـِي	ayy (final form ī)
ـُو	uww (final form ū)

Persian letters added to the Arabic alphabet

پ	p
چ	ch
ژ	zh
گ	g

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*Contributors mentioned here are the editors and those who have translated new material for this volume. The names of those whose translations have already appeared elsewhere and of which we have made use appear in the List of Reprinted Works.

General Introduction

This final volume of *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* deals with some seven centuries from the time that Western history calls the Middle Ages to the modern period, an era of rich philosophical activity whose many treasures are only now being made gradually known to the general public. This is a period during which Persia itself underwent major political and religious change, beginning with the aftermath of the Mongol invasion and the rule of mostly local dynasties, to the integration of Persia by the Safavids and the establishment of the vast Safavid Empire stretching from Central Asia and the borders of India to Iraq and Caucasia. This latter event also marked the establishment of the Persian national state which, despite the loss of much territory, is the basis of present-day Iran as a distinct nation. This period was also witness to the Afghan invasion of Persia, the sack of Isfahan, the capital, the destruction of Safavid rule in the twelfth/eighteenth century, the rise of Nādir Shāh and the re-conquest by him of many eastern territories as far as Delhi, the establishment of the Zand dynasty with its centre in Shiraz and finally the reign of the Qajars who made Tehran their capital and ruled over Persia from the end of the twelfth/eighteenth century to the early decades of the fourteenth/twentieth century with which this volume ends. It was during the later centuries of this period that colonialism became dominant in most of Africa and much of Asia and although Persia proper was never directly colonized, it lost about half of its territory to Tsarist Russia and the British Empire while Afghanistan was separated from Persia and established as an independent state. However, it became permanently separated from Persia only politically, not culturally, intellectually or linguistically. As for Iraq, although it was predominantly Shi'a, it had already been taken over politically by the Ottomans during the Safavid period although, again, intellectually it remained closely bound to Persia.

During this seven-century period, profound religious changes also took place. At the beginning of this era Persia was predominantly Sunni with a sizeable Twelver Shi'i population which, even during the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, was on

2 *From the School of Shiraz to the Twentieth Century*

the rise. With the advent of the Safavids, Shi'ism was declared the official state religion and for the first time in Islamic history a major Twelver Shi'i state was established. Consequently, the central lands of Safavid Persia became predominantly Shi'a. This event itself brought many Arab Shi'i scholars from Lebanon, Bahrain and Iraq to Persia proper while many Persian scholars and philosophers migrated from Persia to India. The outer provinces of the Safavid Empire including most of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Kurdistan and Baluchistan remained Sunni and the loss of most of these areas only increased the Shi'i majority in what remained of Persia itself. Yet, to this day about ten per cent of Persia remains Sunni.

As for Sufism, there were many active orders in Persia before, during and after the Mongol invasion. Most were active among the Sunni population, some played the role of a bridge between Sunnism and Shi'ism and yet others were distinctly Shi'a. It was in fact one of these orders, the Şafawī Order founded by Şafī al-Dīn Ardabili, that became a major political force and established the Safavid dynasty that under Shāh Ismā'īl conquered Persia at the end of the ninth/fifteenth century. Henceforth, while the Sufi orders survived among the Sunni population of Persia, among the Shi'a Sufism also survived but opposition began between the Şafawī Order and other orders, especially the Ni'matullāhī which was finally defeated and temporarily removed from the scene, many of its masters and disciples fleeing from the country to Deccan in India. During the later history of the Safavids many of the Shi'i 'ulamā' turned against Sufism itself and it was not until the early Qajar period that Shi'i Sufi orders spread widely again in what remained of Persia. Needless to say all these events related to both Shi'ism and Sufism played a major role, both direct and indirect, in the development of philosophy in Persia.

Yet, despite all these political, religious, mystical and intellectual transformations, one can observe a remarkable continuity in the domain of philosophy in Persia proper during this long period. Main centres of philosophical activity which had shifted from Khurasan to Azarbaijan by the early aftermath of the Mongol Invasion now moved south to Shiraz and its environs with some important activity also taking place in Isfahan at the same time. And then with the advent of the Safavids Isfahan, the capital, became the principal centre of philosophy and remained an important centre even after Tehran was established as the Qajar capital and became the main focus of philosophical activity. The continuity of the philosophical traditions, despite the shifting of the sites where the most important philosophers taught and wrote, can be seen in the continuous reading of the works and discussion of ideas of the earlier philosophers from al-Kindī, Fārābī and especially Ibn Sīnā to later figures preceding the centuries under consideration in this volume, especially Suhrawardī and Naşīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.

Furthermore, the philosophers of the School of Isfahan continued the philosophical concerns of those of the School of Shiraz, and those of the School of Tehran the philosophical ideas of all that had gone before them. In fact throughout

this long period what remained an abiding reality was the continuity of the main Islamic intellectual traditions, primarily the schools of *mashshā'ī* or Peripatetic and *ishrāqī* or Illuminationist philosophy, *'irfān* or doctrinal Sufism and *kalām* or theology, both Sunni and Shī'a. Of course in each era a new chapter was added to the history of each intellectual tradition, a chapter that was not simply a repetition of the earlier chapters of this history. One sees in fact a meta-historical continuity of each intellectual perspective combined with certain developments and transformations during each historical period. Each school continued to be a living tradition and in contrast to what many have thought, it possessed a life of its own and was not simply the repetition of a received heritage to be treated as being of only 'archaeological' interest.

The six or seven centuries with which this volume deals also include the era during which various philosophers sought to integrate various perspectives that had been established and had remained distinct during earlier centuries. This tendency can also be seen among certain figures already treated in Volume Four of this *Anthology* but the tendency towards synthesis of various schools of thought was pursued more avidly in the Schools of Shiraz and Isfahan. During the period when the School of Shiraz was dominant, philosophers appeared who tried to integrate *mashshā'ī* philosophy with the teachings of the schools of *ishrāq*, *kalām* or *'irfān* or *ishrāq* and *'irfān*, etc. Some even tried to integrate all the schools together setting the foundation for the grand synthesis achieved by Mullā Ṣadrā, the most significant philosophical figure of the School of Isfahan. During this period, however, there were fewer major philosophical figures who were also major scientists and physicians as we see during earlier periods in such figures as Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī although there were some philosophers of the later period such as Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī who were also accomplished scientists or physicians. When, one day, the history of science of this period is written fully, the extent of this scientific activity will become clearer. In any case the history of science of these centuries is inseparable from the history of philosophy of the School of Shiraz. There were, however, a number of the later philosophers who were also authorities in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in contrast to the major earlier philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā or Ṭūsī who, although they knew *fiqh*, did not produce any authoritative works on this subject and were not considered as notable *faqīhs* or jurists in the same way as were some of the later philosophers.

Precisely because of the interest of so many of the philosophers belonging to the period under consideration in this volume in *ishrāq* and *'irfān*, much of the philosophy of these centuries has a strong gnostic colour and many of the philosophers were also devoted to Sufism and the spiritual life. Some modern scholars have therefore simply characterized this later philosophy as 'mysticism' and not philosophy. But this characterization is misleading because it results in a disregard for the rational and logical aspects of these later philosophical traditions

and the mistaking of a metaphysics based on the primacy of the intellect with what 'mystical' implies for many people as being something indifferent or even opposed to logic.

A word must also be said about the language of philosophy during this long period from the eighth/fourteenth to the fourteenth/twentieth century. The primary language of philosophy in Persia during these centuries continued to be Arabic but Persian also became a major vehicle for philosophical discourse going back to Suhrawardī, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī and Ṭūsī. During the period when the School of Shiraz was pre-eminent, this trend of writing philosophical treatises in Persian continued. During the Safavid period, however, marked as it was by the migration of many Arab Shi'ī scholars to Persia, Arabic became more prevalent than before in religious circles and the number of philosophical works composed in Persian diminished as we can see in comparing the number of Persian works written by a Mīr Dāmād or a Mullā Ṣadrā with the corpus of a Suhrawardī or a Ṭūsī. With the coming of the Qajars this trend changed and once again more works began to appear in Persian and this trend has continued to today although philosophical texts in Arabic have continued to play a central role in Persia. Whether written in Arabic or Persian, texts of this long period also reveal a refining, reformulation or introduction of new technical philosophical vocabulary, a process that is of much importance in studying the rich philosophical activity of all the schools considered in this volume.

During the entire period with which we are concerned here, Persia definitely became and remained the main arena throughout the Islamic world for the cultivation of Islamic philosophy and this fact holds true today. After the sixth/twelfth century Islamic philosophy as a distinct school began to wane in the Arab world and philosophical thought or *falsafah* became absorbed into *kalām* and doctrinal Sufism except for Iraq which, in the philosophical domain, was more or less a part of the Persian world as already mentioned. There was, however, much philosophical activity in Ottoman Turkey which remained closely bound to the Persian philosophical scene at least until the Safavid period. Islamic philosophy also began to be cultivated by the Muslims in India from the eighth/fourteenth century onward. In fact the rise of Islamic philosophy in that land and its continuation was closely linked to the School of Shiraz and later the School of Isfahan. In the case of India, in contrast to Ottoman Turkey, this close relationship continued into the Safavid period and the influence of the School of Isfahan and of the works of such figures as Mullā Ṣadrā on Islamic philosophers in India was immense as we see in the philosophical works of the most famous later Islamic intellectual figure of Muslim India, Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi. In fact many Persian philosophers migrated to India and many Indians came to Persia to study philosophy. There are even names of Tibetan students among those who studied in the Khan School of Shiraz where Mullā Ṣadrā taught during the latter part of his life. The material treated in this

volume is, therefore, also of great significance for the history of Islamic philosophy in both Ottoman Turkey and Muslim India. There is as yet no thorough history of later Islamic philosophy but what we do know about it already bears witness to the truth of this assertion.

This volume ends with a period that marks the first encounter of traditional Islamic with modern Western philosophy. The understanding of the philosophical heritage of this period is, therefore, of much significance for a deeper understanding of later currents of Islamic thought not only in Persia itself but also in Ottoman Turkey as far as the School of Shiraz is concerned and in Muslim India as far as the whole later period including both the School of Shiraz and the School of Isfahan is concerned. This fact holds true even for many modern activists and reformist currents. Not only was Ayatollah Khomeini an authority in the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, but the founder of the Jamā'at-i Islāmī of Pakistan and India, Mawlānā Mawdūdī, had translated in his youth parts of Mullā Ṣadrā's masterpiece *al-Asfār al-arba'ah* (The Four Journeys) from Arabic into Urdu. Moreover, the philosophical response in the fourteenth /twentieth century of Islamic philosophy to the challenges of modern thought, as we find in the works of such figures as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, Murtaḍā Muṭahharī and Mahdī Ḥa'irī Yazdī, are based on the ideas of the philosophical schools discussed in this volume.

For a reader unfamiliar with later schools of Islamic philosophy in Persia which are the subject of this book, the question naturally arises concerning the main subjects and ideas with which they deal. In answer to this question one can say that one of the main subjects of concern was logic, to which we shall return soon. The central subject of concern to the philosophers of these schools was, however, metaphysics in which one finds important departures from earlier schools of Islamic philosophy especially in *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah* or transcendent theosophy/philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. The central concern for most philosophers became being/existence or *wujūd*. New interpretations appeared concerning the distinction between *wujūd* and *māhiyyah* or quiddity, the relations between the two, and the thorny question of principiality (*aṣālah*) of *wujūd* or *māhiyyah* about which many contentious debates took place among philosophers themselves. The manner in which this issue was discussed is totally absent from earlier Islamic philosophy although the later philosophers often re-interpreted the ideas of earlier Islamic philosophers according to their own new way of understanding *aṣālat al-wujūd* and *aṣālat al-māhiyyah*.

In classical works of Islamic philosophy such as the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing) and *Kitāb al-Najāt* (The Book of Salvation) of Ibn Sīnā or *Durrat al-tāj* (The Jewel of the Crown) of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī there is a section dealing with metaphysics known as *ilāhiyyāt*. But during this later period this term gains a new significance and Persian philosophers begin to use the term *al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah* (*ḥikmat-i ilāhī* in Persian), which means literally *theo-sophia* or theosophy, in a

novel way, sometimes using the term for *falsafah* itself. Many of these philosophers, such as Mullā Ṣadrā, in fact consider *kalām* as not being able to deal with the science of God, His Qualities, Attributes and Acts. They deal with the issues that *kalām* sought to deal with but within the metaphysical perspective of philosophy. To a large extent *al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah* takes the place of *kalām* in the Shi'i world and the significance of Shi'i *kalām* for the totality of Shi'i intellectual life diminishes although it does not disappear. But even where it did survive, usually its proponents were not opposed to philosophy as were the Ash'arites. This is one of the reasons why Islamic philosophy found a much more congenial home in the Shi'i ambience than in the Sunni world where anti-philosophical (anti-*falsafah*) Ash'arism was dominant. There are of course important exceptions to this assertion as we see in the spread of Islamic philosophy in India not only in Shi'i circles but also in many Sunni ones. Most Ottoman Turkish and many Indian Muslim philosophers were Sunnis, but the fact that Shi'i Persia became the main home of later Islamic philosophy is related to the greater opening of Shi'i *kalām* and Shi'ism in general to *falsafah* than what one finds in the intellectual universe of Sunni *kalām*, especially the main school of Ash'arism.

Since during the whole period under consideration in this volume Persia was, and remains today, the centre of activity of Islamic philosophy, in dealing with Islamic philosophy in Persia during all these centuries we are really dealing with the main current of the history of Islamic philosophy itself. This fact is even accepted by many notable Arab scholars of the Islamic philosophical tradition who, often being influenced by some of the tenets of Arab nationalism, keep referring to this tradition as Arabic philosophy rather than Islamic philosophy even when writing in Arabic in which the very term *al-falsafah al-'arabiyyah* (Arabic philosophy) has no precedence in the history of Islamic thought and even though *falsafah* had ceased to exist in the Arab world after the sixth/twelfth century. It is of some interest to add that the Persians themselves have continued to use the term Islamic philosophy and in contrast to their Arab counterparts have not taken recourse to using the term Persian philosophy despite the fact that later Islamic philosophy has had its main home in Persia.

Let us turn to Persia itself. During the period under consideration here, not only were earlier schools of Islamic philosophy, especially the *mashshā'i* and the *ishrāqī*, continued and were revived with new chapters being added to their history by Persian philosophers, but also new syntheses were created leading to the *ḥikmat-i yamānī* of Mīr Dāmād and *ḥikmat-i muta'āliyah* of Mullā Ṣadrā during the Safavid period. From the time of the founding of the School of Shiraz to the Safavid era, the development of Islamic philosophy in Persia influenced deeply, as mentioned above, philosophical activity in both Ottoman Turkey and Muslim India. Such important Turkish philosophers as Dāwūd Qayṣarī and Ismā'il Anqurawī were closely linked to the development of the *ishrāqī* School in Persia and the philosophical teachings

of Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī reached India mostly through the School of Shiraz. After the advent of the Safavids, because of political and religious rivalries between the Ottomans and Safavids, philosophical contacts between the Turkish and Persian worlds nearly disappeared and the thoughts of such figures as Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā were hardly known in Turkish intellectual circles until quite recently. In India, however, the philosophy of such figures became widely disseminated as can be seen in the writings of the philosophers of Farangī Maḥall and those of the Khayrābādī School. Mullā Ṣadrā's works, especially his *Sharḥ al-hidāyah*, became standard texts of many Indian *madrasahs*. One day when the detailed histories of Islamic philosophy in Ottoman Turkey and Muslim India are written, much of the material treated in this volume will have to be considered as part of those histories.

It is necessary to come back to the fact that it is the philosophical traditions treated in this volume that were the background for the first encounter of Islamic and modern Western philosophy. Already in the thirteenth/nineteenth century, Descartes was translated into Persian and his ideas came to the attention of traditional Persian philosophers. Moreover, it was to questions based mostly on the philosophy of Kant that the Qajar philosopher Āqā 'Alī Mudarris responded in his *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (Marvels of Wisdom) and it was with a view to this earlier contact that several fourteenth/twentieth century Islamic philosophers of Persia such as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i and Mīrzā Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī wrote important philosophical rebuttals or responses to various currents of Western philosophy such as Marxism and analytical philosophy. These works lie, however, beyond the subject under consideration in this volume. Even those well known so-called thirteenth/nineteenth- and fourteenth/twentieth-century Islamic reformers, who were philosophically inclined, drew from the Islamic philosophical tradition. Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī (al-Afghānī) was a student of the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā before he was exiled from Persia and Muḥammad Iqbāl was deeply immersed in the philosophy of Suhrawardī and the later *ishrāqī* School. As for Mawlānā 'Alī Thanwī, who was a major traditional Indian thinker rather than a 'reformer', he was also a philosopher in the time-honoured tradition of Islamic philosophy and wrote several works that belong to this tradition.

Returning from this historical digression to the philosophical content of the ideas presented in the texts translated below, one can ask what exactly were the most central themes and subjects that concerned the philosophers under consideration in the pages that follow? With what philosophical issues does this later philosophy, often referred to as the *ḥikmat* tradition, deal? As mentioned briefly above, the answer is that although this *ḥikmat* tradition is concerned primarily with metaphysics or *ḥikmat-i ilāhī* both *khāṣṣ* (particular) and *'āmm* (general), meaning both metaphysics pertaining to God, His Names, Qualities and Attributes, or what some in the West would call philosophical theology and universal

metaphysics, it is also concerned with logic, cosmology, epistemology and many other major issues of philosophy. In the field of logic the teachings of Ibn Sīnā, who followed mostly Aristotle in this field, the book on logic or *manṭiq* of the former's *Shifā'* served more than other works as a basis for all later developments. But there *were* later developments that were not simply repetitions of the formal logic of the master of Muslim Peripatetics but added new chapters with new ideas pertinent to the history of logic in Islamic thought or in fact logic in general. This is particularly true in certain discussions concerning universals, the categories, the syllogism (*qiyās*) and attribution (*ḥaml*). To ascertain this fact all that one needs to do is to study the works of Mullā Ṣadrā on logic or the logical section of Sabzawārī's *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* (Commentary on the Poem *Manẓūmah*), the *Manẓūmah* being itself a work, entirely in poetic rhyme and rhythm, which summarizes Ṣadrīan philosophy and is still a widely used text in Persia for the teaching of Islamic philosophy.

The main concern of these later schools of philosophy, especially what is usually referred to as the *ḥikmat* tradition was, however, metaphysics or *ilāhiyyāt* or *ḥikmat-i ilāhī*. In its particular sense (*khāṣṣ*) it dealt with the nature of God, His Names, Qualities, and Attributes and included such questions as Divine Knowledge, Divine Will and Providence, creation, and good and evil. This aspect of the *ḥikmat* tradition covers the field that in the West is called philosophical theology and in the Shi'ī milieu, as we have already recalled, it replaced to a large extent, but not completely, *kalām* to which it was opposed especially in its Ash'arite form to the extent that Mullā Ṣadrā, the greatest figure of later Islamic philosophy, considered the activity of the *mutakallimūn*, usually translated as 'theologians', to be illegitimate since they sought to deal with subjects about which they did not possess the necessary knowledge. Like so many other disciplines in the Islamic intellectual tradition, the detailed history of later Shi'ī theology has yet to be written. If it were to be written one day, it would have to include not only works on Shi'ī *kalām* per se by such figures as 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, but most of all texts of the *ḥukamā'* dealing with *ḥikmat-i ilāhī* in its particular sense (*khāṣṣ*).

The heart of *ḥikmat-i ilāhī* was, however, in its general sense (*ʿāmm*) or universal metaphysics. Although some of the later philosophers such as Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī considered the Divine Principle to be above Being, which they considered as Its first determination or manifestation, most *ḥukamā-yi ilāhī* identified the First Principle or Absolute Reality with Absolute Being whose Essence transcends all definitions, delimitations, and conditions even the condition of being delimited. They, therefore, developed a vast ontology whose scope transcended the ontology of Ibn Sīnā who has been called by some Western scholars the 'father of the philosophy of being' in medieval philosophy. *Wujūd* or being/existence as envisaged by a *ḥakīm* such as Mullā Ṣadrā transcends what most medieval Scholastics in the West understood by *Esse*. For the later Islamic philosophers *wujūd* embraces both the

state of being *esse* and the act of being *esto*. Moreover, the later Persian *ḥakīms* distinguished between the concept of being (*mafḥūm al-wujūd*) and the reality of being (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*) and based their study of being not only on conceptual considerations, but above all on the *experience* of Being. The spiritual experience of Being determined the horizon and framework of their ontology. It has been reported that Edmund Husserl, the founder of the school of phenomenology in modern Germany, had said on his death-bed that he had tried all his life to reach Being without recourse to the experience of Being and had therefore failed. If this report had been presented to one of the Ṣadrian *ḥukamā'*, he would have said, 'Of course, for there is no way to understand Being without the spiritual/intellectual *experience* of Being.'

From the wedding of this *experience* and philosophical speculation, the later *ḥakīms* developed an ontology with vast dimensions beyond the confines of the ontology found in the *Shifā'* and similar works and also beyond the teachings of the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*) many of whose intuitions they nevertheless integrated into their works. These later philosophers therefore dealt in a new manner with such classical subjects as the meaning of *wujūd* and *māhiyyah* or quiddity, the gradation of being, causality and many other key issues discussed by earlier philosophers. With Mullā Ṣadrā the principles of the unity (*waḥdah*), gradation (*tashkīk*) and principiality (*aṣālah*) of *wujūd* were made central to metaphysics. Thereby a whole new chapter was established in Islamic metaphysics and ontology. When one reads the discussion of causality in the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā and compares it with the treatment of this subject by Ibn Sīnā, who follows to a large extent Aristotle, one sees how such classical issues of philosophy were transformed by the metaphysical vision of the later Islamic philosophers.

As far as cosmology is concerned, although later Islamic philosophy was not as much concerned with natural philosophy as were the earlier Peripatetics such as Ibn Sīnā, many very pertinent transformations were brought about in cosmology by a number of *ḥakīms* treated in this volume. The imaginal world (*'ālam al-khayāl*), to which Suhrawardī makes some allusions in the microcosmic aspect, was fully treated as an integral and very significant dimension of macrocosmic reality. New approaches to the study of time (*zamān*) in relation to aeviternity (*dahr*) and eternity (*sarmad*) were made by Mīr Dāmād and some others who followed him. And the meaning of motion was completely transformed by Mullā Ṣadrā through the thesis of trans-substantial motion (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*) which, without denying the reality of the world of immutability, presented a view of the world of becoming in constant trans-substantial motion moving toward its entelechy. Moreover, this movement was seen as being independent of the motion of the heavens and more specifically of Ptolemaic astronomy. Ontology and the chain of being were made independent of any astronomical schemes with the very important consequence that Islamic metaphysics was not rejected in Persia when

Galilean and Newtonian astronomy appeared upon the scene and did not suffer the same eclipse of traditional ontology that one sees in Europe after the coming of the Scientific Revolution.

Any comprehensive philosophy must of course deal with epistemology, and the question of how we know. In the unfolding of the history of philosophy in Persia we observe an ever-widening means of attaining philosophical knowledge. For Ibn Sīnā the means of knowing philosophically is mostly confined to the *'aql* or intellect, which, however, has many levels and cannot be confined only to reason as currently understood, although he does also allude to the power of *ḥads* or intuition. With Suhrawardī, intuition (which he calls *dhawq*) is made central as a means of gaining full philosophical knowledge complementing *baḥṭh* or ratiocination. With Mullā Ṣadrā, revelation comes to be considered also as a central way to gain philosophical knowledge so that he speaks of the three ways of *al-Qur'ān*, *al-'irfān* or gnostic and illuminative knowledge and *al-burhān* or demonstration as all being necessary for the attainment of knowledge of *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah* or transcendent theosophy/philosophy, the philosophical school founded by him. Mullā Ṣadrā and many other later philosophers also speak of the epistemological power of the imaginal faculty (*khayāl*, *mutakhayyilah*). One can hardly over-emphasize the importance of this widening of the horizon of manners and means of knowing philosophically and epistemology for the destiny of philosophy in Persia during the past few centuries.

The discussion of epistemology among the later Persian philosophers must of necessity include a reference to the relation between the knower and the known or more precisely the intellector (*'āqil*) and the intelligible (*ma'qūl*). Already in the fourth/tenth century the Peripatetic philosopher Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Āmirī had held that knowledge necessitated the unity of *al-'āqil* and *al-ma'qūl* but this view was severely criticized by Ibn Sīnā and henceforth no longer accepted in the mainstream of Islamic philosophy. The Avicennan criticism was, however, rejected by Suhrawardī and the thesis of the unity of the intellector, intellect and the intelligible in the act of knowledge was revived by Mullā Ṣadrā who placed the thesis of *ittiḥād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl* (unity of the intellector and the intelligible) at the heart of his epistemology. Moreover, he was followed in this matter by most later *ḥakims*. According to this doctrine knowledge transforms the mode of being of the knower. If according to Aristotle one knows according to the mode of one's being, knowledge itself transforms, through the very act of knowing or intellection, the mode of being of the person who has gained the knowledge in question. The later Islamic philosophers and especially Mullā Ṣadrā come back to one of the central theses of the perennial philosophy which asserts the ultimate unity of being and knowing. We are what we know in the deepest sense of this word and know according to who we are and what our mode of existence is. Man is what he knows and he knows according to who he is.

An issue that is closely linked to epistemology is semantics. Already in his *Kitāb al-Hurūf* (Book of Words) Fārābī showed his concern with this subject and what in Islamic philosophy is called 'the discussion of language' (*mabḥath al-alfāz*) was treated by many other philosophers. During the later period the discussion of semantics, so important in modern Western philosophy, was treated extensively by scholars of Shi'i *uṣūl al-fiqh* (or principles of jurisprudence) so that works dealing with this subject, although belonging to the domain of the transmitted (*naqlī*) and not intellectual (*'aqlī*) sciences, gained an important philosophical dimension. But the *ḥukamā'* were also of course concerned with this subject and later Islamic philosophy in Persia has left us an important heritage in this field.

Later Persian philosophers were, moreover, well aware of the faculty psychology of the Peripatetics as discussed extensively in Book VI of the *Shifā'* and going back for the most part to Aristotle and his Alexandrian commentators. But psychology (*'ilm al-nafs* and also *ma'rifat al-nafs*) gained immense new dimensions in later Islamic philosophy. All that one needs to do is to compare the above-mentioned work of Ibn Sīnā with book IV of the *Asfār* (Four Journeys) of Mullā Ṣadrā which is without doubt the most far-reaching and profound treatment of psychology in the annals of Islamic philosophy. The later *ḥakīms* drew not only from Peripatetic sources but also from *ishrāqī* ones when dealing with this subject. Moreover, they drew heavily from Sufi psychology which concerns the journey of the soul to its perfection and deals with the vast inner landscape of the soul and psyche in a manner that far transcends what one finds in works of earlier philosophical psychology. Many treatises of classical Sufism such as the *Risālat al-qushayriyyah* (The Qushayrī Treatise) of Imam Abū'l-Qāsim Qushayrī, the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Revivification of the Sciences of Religion) of Abū Ḥamid Ghazzālī and the *Mirṣād al-ibād* (The Path of God's Bondsmen) of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī are to a large extent works devoted to spiritual psychology. This fact is of course also true of many of the works of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī whose immense influence on Mullā Ṣadrā in this domain is so evident in Book IV of the *Asfār*, where Mullā Ṣadrā quotes extensively from the Murcian master.

Precisely because of its relation to gnosis and spiritual experience, later Islamic philosophy in Persia was concerned with the study of the psyche not only in order to discern its ordinary faculties, but also to explore its vast reality in depth and breadth beyond the boundaries of ordinary consciousness which is aware of only the surface of 'the ocean of the soul'. This later psychology thus became related to the many worlds throughout which the soul must journey in order to reach its ultimate goal and which it also contains within itself with special attention being paid to the imaginal faculty of the soul and the imaginal world itself whose relation to man's posthumous states was discussed by many later *ḥakīms*. In a sense the psychology of a Mullā Ṣadrā in the Safavid period or a Sabzawārī in the Qajar era concerns on the one hand the relation of this discipline to medicine and the earthly

human body and on the other to eschatology and ultimately the realization of the Divine.

Not only in psychology, but also in many other domains later Islamic philosophy deals with specifically religious themes much more than what one finds in earlier periods. Some in fact have said that the more the history of Islamic philosophy moves away from its origin, the more does Islamic philosophy become Islamic. Of course Islamic philosophy, going back to al-Kindī, was always concerned with Islamic issues and breathed in the Islamic universe, but philosophical engagement with specifically religious questions such as, for example, eschatology and resurrection as seen by Islam only increased as time went on. All one needs to do is to compare the works of Ibn Sīnā, who was also concerned with eschatology, with those of Mullā Ṣadrā or Mullā ‘Alī Zunūzī. Later philosophers turned to the symbolic and philosophical significance of the Qur’ānic description of eschatological realities such as bodily resurrection, the Bridge of Ṣirāṭ and the Balance as well as the significance of posthumous experience. The closest works to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* in the Islamic world are such texts as Book IV of the *Asfār* along with certain sections of Ibn ‘Arabī’s *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Meccan Illuminations).

The later *ḥakīms* also turned their full attention to the question of the eternity (*qidam*) or createdness (*ḥudūth*) of the world, a central problem that was present from the beginning of Islamic philosophy and theology and resulted from the confrontation between the view of *creatio ex nihilo* of the Abrahamic religions, reasserted in the ‘Qur’ānic dictum, ‘God said “be” (*kun*) and it [that is creation] was!’ and the metaphysical notion of continuous emanation (*fayḍ*) without temporal origin that was also incorporated into the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy inherited by Muslims, not to speak of the Greek idea of the eternity of the world. Later works of Islamic philosophy, belonging to the period under consideration in this volume, contain some of the most profound studies of the relation between *ḥudūth* and *qidam* in the annals of Islamic thought. Several new solutions were proposed to this rationally intractable problem, such as the one by Mīr Dāmād in his theory of *ḥudūth* in aeviternity (*al-ḥudūth al-dahrī*), or Mullā Ṣadrā in his recourse to trans-substantial motion in combination with his ontology applied to this question. Certain *ḥakīms* who followed these two masters in turn criticized their solutions. We remember that one of our teachers in Iran, Sayyid Abū’l-Ḥasan Qazwīnī, who was an undisputed master of the School of Mullā Ṣadrā and who considered himself as his follower, once said that concerning this one question even Mullā Ṣadrā had not provided a solution that was completely satisfactory philosophically.

Engagement with religious subjects during this period also involved much greater philosophical attention being paid to the text of the Qur’ān itself. Already Ibn Sīnā had composed a few Qur’ānic commentaries but his philosophical works

rarely refer to Qur'ānic verses. Such verses appear more often in Suhrawardī's treatises and increase further in the School of Shiraz, where some texts appear that are direct philosophical commentaries on certain revealed verses. In the School of Isfahan this tendency intensifies until with Mullā Ṣadrā we witness the composition of the most extensive philosophical Qur'ānic commentary in Islamic history. This *ḥakīm's* philosophical commentaries fill seven large volumes in their contemporary edition while he also wrote separate works on Qur'ānic exegesis.

Since most of these later *ḥakīms* were Shi'i, they also drew a great deal from Shi'i collections of *ḥadīth*, which include the sayings of both the Prophet and the Shi'i Imams. They also benefited a great deal specifically from the *Nahj al-balāghah* (Paths of Eloquence) of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. For example, Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a major commentary on *Uṣūl al-kāfi* (The Sufficient Principles) of Kulaynī, which is the most important collection of Twelver Shi'i *ḥadīth*. This commentary, although dealing with Shi'i *ḥadīth*, is at the same time a major philosophical work especially the section dealing with *Kitāb al-'Aql* (Book of the Intellect). During these later centuries the sayings of the Shi'i Imam along with those of the Prophet became for the first time subjects for philosophical meditations and many traditional authorities believe that the fact that subjects treated philosophically expanded so much during this later period in comparison with earlier eras of Islamic philosophy is due to a large extent to the penetration of this new source into the intellectual universe of Islamic philosophers.

The relation between reason and revelation, or faith and reason, has always been of central concern to thinkers in various religious worlds, especially those of Abrahamic religions, whether these thinkers were philosophers, theologians or gnostics and mystics. As far as Islamic philosophy is concerned, one can trace the history of dealing with this problem from al-Kindī to the present day. Our later *ḥakīms* continued to be deeply concerned with this issue and formulated solutions not found in the works of the Peripatetics, Ismaili philosophers and *ishrāqīs* who were also all concerned with it. In this case as in so many others, when one day the history of the treatment of the relation between reason and revelation or faith and reason in Islamic thought is written fully, the cardinal role of these later *ḥakīms* and the continuous pertinence of their views for contemporary Muslims will become clear.

This later period not only brought forth a new understanding of the relation between philosophy and religion, but also a new philosophical interest in what today is called 'religious pluralism'. During earlier centuries of Islamic history historians, theologians and Sufis had written about other religions but rarely philosophers, there being some exceptions, for example, among a few Ismaili philosophers. During the Safavid period a number of attacks against Islam by Christian missionaries reached Isfahan and it was the *ḥakīms* who took it upon themselves to provide an intellectual and philosophical response, as we see in the

case of Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī, among the foremost students of Mīr Dāmād, who, like several other *ḥakīms*, was interested in the question of religious pluralism seen from a philosophical point of view.

Closely related to this subject is what is called today comparative religious philosophy. It has been said that the *Tahqīq mā li'l-hind* (India) by the fourth/tenth-century polymath Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī is the first 'scientific' work of comparative religion in history. One could perhaps make the same claim for the field of comparative philosophy in its relation to religion or what we could call comparative religious philosophy for the Safavid *ḥakīm* Mīr Findiriskī's commentary upon *Yoga Vasiṣṭha*, the famous text of Hindu philosophy. Furthermore, it was this later tradition of Islamic philosophy in Persia that served as the intellectual basis for the treatment of Hindu thought by many later Muslim thinkers of the Indian Subcontinent.

Finally, it must be mentioned that during this long period with which we are concerned here, there was less attention paid to the philosophy of nature and of mathematics as well as to political philosophy and even philosophical ethics than during earlier centuries. We do not find an extensive treatment of *ṭabī'īyyāt* (natural philosophy) or *riyāḍiyyāt* (mathematics) in even an extensive work such as the *Asfār* as we find in the *Shifā'*. Nor do we find many works on political philosophy of the kind written by Fārābī, Ibn Rushd and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī among the writings of the later *ḥakīms*. During more recent centuries political thought was left mostly to the jurists although there were some figures such as Mullā Muḥammad Mahdī Narāqī of the Qajar period who wrote on this subject. It is of interest to note that the new political theory of the 'rule of the jurist' (*wilāyat-i faqīh*) which Ayatollah Khomeini formulated and then implemented in Iran with the Islamic Revolution of 1979, had some of its roots in the theses of Narāqī, which were, however, much modified. It must also be recalled that Ayatollah Khomeini was more of a Ṣadrīan philosopher and Ibn 'Arabian gnostic than he was a jurist and that his teacher Ayatollah Shāhābādī, by whom he was deeply influenced, was also a *ḥakīm*.

As far as philosophical ethics is concerned, neither Mīr Dāmād, Mīr Findiriskī, nor Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a separate treatise like *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (Naṣīrian Ethics) of Ṭūsī. As for Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, the famous student of Mullā Ṣadrā, his major work on ethics *al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā'* (The White Path) is based more on Sufism in a Shī'i context than on earlier philosophical ethics. This major work on ethics is in fact a Shī'i version of Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* as the rest of the title of Kāshānī's work, *fi Iḥyā' al-iḥyā'* or 'On the revivification of the *Iḥyā'* (of Ghazzālī)', reveals. Narāqī did, however, write a work devoted to philosophical ethics so that any statement about the decrease of interest in those subjects in the later history of Islamic thought in comparison with the earlier centuries must be nuanced.

Even in the fields of natural and mathematical philosophy our judgment must be conditional for there is still much research that needs to be carried out before final judgment can be made about this question. For example, it was during these very centuries that new geometries involving pentagonal patterns began to appear on the surface of the edifices of certain mosques, decorations which imply knowledge of Penrose tiles whose properties Western mathematicians had thought had been discovered only recently. This type of knowledge usually remained oral among Muslims and few texts have been discovered concerning such questions. But there is much to unearth and there may have been greater concern for mathematics and even the natural sciences and their philosophies than we are able to know today on the basis of known texts.

The content of this volume is divided into three sections dealing with the School of Shiraz, the School of Isfahan and the School of Tehran. These schools are presented chronologically but this does not mean that with the appearance of the School of Isfahan the School of Shiraz disappeared and so on. In fact philosophy continued to be taught in Shiraz into the Qajar and Pahlavi periods and produced some important recent and contemporary Islamic philosophers such as Jawād Muṣliḥ. Nor did the appearance of the School of Tehran mean the end of the School of Isfahan which continued to train such important philosophers as Jahāngīr Khān Qashqā'i and Mīrzā Raḥīm Arbāb in the Qajar and Pahlavi eras.

Moreover, our division of the history of this long period does not mean that at the time of the flourishing of each schools there was no significant philosophical activity going on elsewhere in Persia as we have had occasion to mention already. For example, at the height of activity of the School of Tehran, Sabzawar in Khurasan was also an important centre of philosophy thanks to Ḥājji Mullā Ḥādī Sabzawārī who resided in that city and trained many notable philosophers there. Our dividing the content of this volume into these three schools identified with particular cities does mean, however, that in each period identified with one of these schools, the site of the school in question was the central focus of philosophical activity in Persia.

The content of this volume has also been determined by the availability of texts. Until about fifty years ago, the vast majority of philosophical texts of later Islamic philosophy were in manuscript form and not generally available in edited and printed form. Of course one might say that this fact is also true of Islamic philosophy as a whole. Even today almost half of the works of Ibn Sīnā have never been printed. But at least the main works of the major figures of the earlier period have had some kind of printed edition even if not all these printed versions have been critically edited. During the past half century many more texts of the later period have been made available in printed form as awareness of this later tradition increased in Persia thanks to the efforts of Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Henry Corbin, myself and

others. During the past two decades the University of Shiraz has sought to make the School of Shiraz better known and even held an international conference on this school. Through various celebrations of Mullā Ṣadrā, more attention has been paid to his works and numerous editions of his hitherto unedited and unpublished texts have appeared in well-edited versions. Likewise, in recent years many works of Mīr Dāmād, Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī and other figures of the School of Isfahan have seen the light of day in printed form. As for the Qajar period, the past few decades have also been witness to the editing and printing of many treatises of Sabzawārī not to speak of the critical edition of the complete philosophical opus of Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris which should serve as model for future scholarship in this field.

Yet, much of the material still remains in manuscript form and significant new manuscripts are constantly being discovered. The situation of philosophy in Persia is not like that of, let us say, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German philosophy where the works of the major philosophers such as Leibniz, Kant and Hegel are readily available in critical editions and only rarely is an as yet unedited work discovered. Needless to say, the content of this volume of philosophy in Persia has been affected by these conditions. The best that we have been able to do is to select the most significant figures and what we have considered as their most significant writings that were available to us. When one day all the pertinent texts are made available to the public in edited and printed form, a more complete anthology can be prepared. We feel, however, that despite these limitations, our anthology provides a true picture of the main peaks of the mountain range of later Islamic philosophy in Persia even if there are other hills and less prominent mountains to be discovered through further exploration.

With this volume our *Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* comes to an end, but we are fully aware that another volume is needed for the past century, a period during which Western philosophy entered with full force onto the Persian philosophical scene. During this period Islamic philosophy was revived; texts of Western philosophy ranging from Descartes, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche to Heidegger, Sartre and Wittgenstein were translated into Persian and found followers among Persian thinkers; and perennial philosophy and traditional metaphysics found followers in Persia. Today Persia must certainly be considered as one of the most, if not the most, active centres of philosophical thought in the Islamic world.

Having been personally so much involved in the philosophical activity in Persia during the past half century, I do not feel that I should accept the responsibility of editing a sixth volume of this anthology, however, I have spoken to some highly qualified Persian scholars and hope that before long a volume covering the past century will see the light of day.

There now remains the task of thanking all those who have made the appearance of this anthology possible. First and foremost I wish to thank my co-editor Mehdi

Aminrazavi. Some twenty-five years ago I invited him to collaborate with me in this colossal project. He accepted with open arms and during all these years has performed this Herculean task assiduously and with love and devotion. Without his help this project would have never been realized. And then on behalf of us both I wish to thank all the translators who made the presentation of often difficult Arabic and Persian philosophical texts into English possible. Furthermore, there are all those who made financial contributions at earlier stages of the project. They include UNESCO, The Great Islamic Encyclopedia (*Dā'irat al-ma'ārif-i buzurg-i islāmī*), the Iranian Academic Society, the Foundation for Traditional Studies and numerous individuals who made this project possible.

And lastly we wish to thank Farhad Daftary, Azim Nanji, M. R. Jozi and Patricia Salazar of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, and I. B. Tauris. Together they have made the final editing and publication of these volumes possible.

We hope that *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* will make not only Persians themselves, but also other Muslims as well as non-Muslims in the West and elsewhere more fully aware of the long and continuous tradition of philosophy in the land from which both Aminrazavi and I hail. I thank God for having given us the health, energy and means to bring this monumental project to a successful conclusion. May these volumes be a contribution, however humble, to a better understanding of a very important aspect of Persian culture, of certain major aspects of Islamic philosophy and of what some now call world philosophy.

wa'LLāhu 'alamu bi'l-ṣawāb
Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Prolegomenon

Volume Five of *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* is the final volume of a work that brings together more than two millennia of intellectual and philosophical life and activity on the Iranian plateau. The collaborative efforts of the editors, which span several decades, have finally come to their fruition by providing a comprehensive survey of philosophical thought in Persia up to the fourteenth/twentieth century. This collaboration has sought to highlight and make available in English some of the most salient contributions of Persian philosophers through the long history of intellectual activity in Persia. In these five volumes, over seventy-six philosophers and philosophical theologians and one hundred and twenty-five texts, many unknown to the Western world until they were introduced, translated and analyzed by scholars in the field from virtually all continents in the world.

We have begun the present volume, which spans over half a millennium up to the Pahlavi era, with the School of Shiraz, and a discussion on Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī's *Risālat al-zawrā'* (The Treatise of Baghdad). This brief treatise provides a discussion on causality in its various modalities, existence and non-existence and whether they are accidental or essential in nature.

The second chapter of Part One begins with a logical treatise of Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, *Risālah fī shubhat jadhr al-aṣamm* (Treatise on the Problem of the Liar's Paradox). The significance of this problem is that the liar's statement represents a grammatically correct sentence which, however, does not lend itself to be treated within a logical framework. In this logico-philosophical paradox, still of interest to contemporary logicians, Dashtakī treats the problem in a dialectical fashion. He presents the views of other major philosophers on this subject, such as Taftāzānī, al-Kātibī and al-Samarqandī, among others, and provides responses to them.

In the third chapter we have included two treatises by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī, his *Akhlāq-i Maṣṣūrī* (Maṣṣūrīan Ethics), which is a major work on ethics, as well as *Maqāmāt al-ʿarīfīn* (Stations of Knowers). *Akhlāq-i Maṣṣūrī* is one of the major works on theoretical and philosophical ethics in the Islamic

philosophical tradition, going back to the well known works of Miskawayh and Tūsī. Dashtakī tells us, ‘the book contains the exposition of views and the use of language in order to explain the principles of the science of ethics’, and goes on to offer an in-depth analysis of the sources of virtues and vices of the soul. The treatise comes to a conclusion with a discourse on love where Dashtakī offers a spiritual rendition of Aristotle’s theory of ‘virtue ethics’.

In the second part of this chapter which consists of *Maqāmāt al-‘arīfīn*, Ghiyāth al-Dīn offers a gnostic commentary on the ninth section of *Fī maqāmāt al-‘arīfīn* (On the Stations of Knowers) of *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbihāt* (Directives and Remarks) by Ibn Sīnā. Some of Dashtakī’s commentaries may have been inspired by Khwājah ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī’s *Manāzil al-sā’irīn* (Resting Places of the Travellers), as well as certain *kalāmī* discussions. This treatise of Dashtakī carries a Shi‘i orientation and incorporates discussions of certain themes of Peripatetic philosophy drawn mostly from the works of Ibn Sīnā, the *kalām* of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, with consideration of certain criticisms by later theologians such as Ījī, Jurjānī and Taftāzānī. It also contains references to Suhrawardī’s *ishrāqī* thought.

Shams al-Dīn Khafrī, is the fourth notable figure belonging to the School of Shiraz to whom we have dedicated a chapter. We have included two of his treatises: *Risālah fi’l-hayūlā* (Treatise on Prime Matter) and *Risālat ‘ibrat al-fuḍalā’*: *Jadhr al-aṣamm* (Treatise on the Bewilderment of the Learned: The Liar’s Paradox). In the first, Khafrī presents the gist of the philosophers’ proofs of the thesis that corporeal form is of a singular nature in kind and if stripped of all its accidents, is left as prime matter. In this context, after having discussed the views of Ibn Sīnā in some detail, Khafrī offers several arguments to prove the existence of prime matter. In the second treatise, we see his response and commentary on *The Liar’s Paradox* as presented by Dawānī. In a series of critiques, Khafrī replies to Dawānī’s arguments and, like some modern logicians, refers to the linguistic basis of this logical paradox.

The School of Isfahan and its grand masters are the topic of Part Two of this volume. We have begun with a translation of parts of Mīr Dāmād’s *Qabasāt* (Sparks of Fire), the magnum opus of the founder of the School of Isfahan. This work is known for its complex language and deals predominantly with the question of time. The section chosen here is from the first *qabas*, which deals with such subjects as different kinds of creation, divisions of existence and establishes the basis for judgment among different categories of existents. This section is particularly rich in terms of Mīr Dāmād’s references to Ibn Sīnā’s view on time, the problems of the createdness, and/or eternity of the world, as well as other philosophers’ views on time and creation. One finds here a specific focus on the views of Suhrawardī, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, and Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī.

We have devoted the next chapter to Mīr Findiriskī, a much neglected figure in the history of Islamic philosophy, with his treatise, *Risālah-yi šinā‘iyyah* (Treatise

on the Arts). Relying on Plato's view of the ideal society and using the human body as a metaphor of perfection, Mīr Findiriskī proposes that an ideal society should be constructed on the model of the human being. He further classifies the professions, and the arts and sciences, in order to indicate how to achieve harmony in society. Mīr Findiriskī argues that harmony and balance can be restored in society only when all parts of society function harmoniously together.

We would like to have included a section from Mīr Findiriskī's translation and commentary upon the famous Hindu text *Sharḥ-i jūk-i basasht* (Commentary on Yoga Vasiṣṭha) which entails an encyclopedic and detailed knowledge of Hinduism but space did not allow it.

The third philosopher of the School of Isfahan presented here is Mullā Ṣadrā, the most illustrious member of this school and considered by many as the greatest metaphysician among Islamic philosophers. We have included translations from a number of his works, most appearing in English for the first time. They include *al-Asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'ah* (The Four Intellectual Journeys) *al-Mashā'ir* (Metaphysical Penetrations), and *Ittiḥād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl* (Unification of the Intellector and the Intellected).

The philosophical masterpiece of Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, represents in many ways the *summa* of Islamic philosophy. The extract included here, from volume one of the *Asfār*, discusses such issues as creation as an act of Divine Mercy, emanation, and Mullā Ṣadrā's own introduction concerning why he decided to compose this work. In the subsequent sections on Mullā Ṣadrā, the definition of philosophy, the question of Being and its gradation, a number of 'illuminationist insights', and motion and how it occurs in the category of substance are among the subjects that are treated.

Next, selections are presented from *al-Mashā'ir* translated for the first time into English on the basis of the Ṣadrian Schools's understanding by the editor of this volume, Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The bulk of discussion revolves around the question of existence and its various modalities with some references to metaphysical illumination or what Mullā Ṣadrā calls (*ishrāq ḥikamī*).

Ittiḥād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl deals with a subject that constitutes one of the most significant and complex problems in both theoretical Sufism and philosophy and is the subject of our next section. This treatise brings to light the epistemological and ontological relation established once a subject, i.e., the knower or the intellector comes to know or intellect an object, that is, the known or the intellected. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, in the case of knowing God and also intelligibles through intellectual intuition, the subject, object and the epistemic and ultimately existential relationship between them are one and the same.

We next turn our attention to the two Lāhijis, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī and Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī. In the section devoted to 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, we have selected two texts: *Gawhar-i murād* (The Pearl of Desire) and *Shawāriq*

al-ilhām (Lights of Inspiration). In the first text, Lāhijī discusses the hierarchy of existence, the role of the intellect and reason and their relationship to the concept and reality of existence. Such themes as the difference between philosophy and theology and the relationship between intellectual sciences and religious laws are treated here. Finally, the question of emanation and causality as it relates to the hierarchy of existents and the created and uncreated worlds, as well as free will and determinism are discussed in this section. The second text included here, *Shawāriq al-ilhām* represents a dialogue between Ṭūsī and Lāhijī in which the latter quotes Ṭūsī on particular issues and then responds to him. Among topics here are: proof of the Maker, God's Attributes and His Effects.

The following chapter is devoted to Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq, the son of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī. Here, we have selected a part of his *Rasā'il-i fārsī* (Persian Treatises) in which such topics as the very definition of philosophy, Reality and the relationship between philosophy and religion as well as how the former can be part of the latter are discussed. Also, the concept of the Necessary Being and its Attributes, knowledge of particulars, free will and determinism, and the createdness and eternity of the world are discussed.

The chapter that follows is devoted to Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī, a major student of Mīr Dāmād and yet a much neglected figure in scholarship in Western languages. His two treatise *Sharḥ al-shifā'* (Commentary on the Book of Healing of Ibn Sīnā) is translated here for the first time. 'Alawī begins the first treatise by referring to Plato, Aristotle, Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā and mentioning a host of philosophical issues from Zeno's paradox to Greek and Ash'arite atomism, as well as the problem of infinite divisibility. Matter, its eternity or origination and the immortality of the soul are also among topics treated in this text. 'Alawī's references to the *ishrāqī* perspective as well as two views identified with Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism add further richness to his treatise.

The next philosopher under consideration is Mullā Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī from whose writings we have selected *Ithbāt-i wājib* (Proof of the Necessary Being) and *al-Aṣl al-aṣīl* (The Fundamental Principle). The first treatise, though brief, contains five 'inquiries' in which Tabrizī offers several proofs for the existence of God and brings his discussion to an end by quoting Imam Muḥammad Bāqir's view regarding the Divine Attributes.

In Tabrizī's second, equally brief, treatise *al-Aṣl al-aṣīl*, he begins by arguing why 'only one proceeds from the One'. He continues with a treatment of such topics as the refutation of Mullā Ṣadrā's trans-substantial motion, Tabrizī's own view of the primacy of essence rather than existence as held by Mullā Ṣadrā and how the soul obtains knowledge. The last two themes were also central to Suhrawardī's philosophical position, especially the principiality of essence, which was opposed by Mullā Ṣadrā but nevertheless embraced by some of the later Islamic philosophers.

The next major figure of the School of Isfahan included in our *Anthology* is Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, who was himself one of the major students of Mullā Ṣadrā. From Kāshānī we have included *Kalimāt maknūnah* (Hidden Words) and *al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah* (Divine Sciences). In *Kalimāt maknūnah*, Fayḍ Kāshānī undertakes a thorough discussion of the idea of the Perfect Man as the self manifestation of the Absolute, within the context of Shi'i mystical philosophy. He develops the major philosophical notion concerning Self-manifestation or emanation, as well as the concept of absolute prophethood (*nubuwwah*), absolute sainthood (*walāyah*), limited prophethood and limited sainthood. In *al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah*, Kāshānī offers a concise and inclusive discussion concerning most of the key concepts in Shi'i gnosis such as existence and non-existence, the Divine Essence and the descending order of existence down to the corporeal domain.

Our survey of notable figures of the School of Isfahan continues with the presentation of two treatises by Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, *Asrār al-'ibādāt* (Mysteries of Worship) and *Ta'liqāt bar uthūlūjiyā* (Commentary on the *Enneads*). *Asrār al-'ibādāt* is a philosophico-gnostic interpretation of Islamic rites including the daily prayers, fasting and *hajj*. Qāḍī Sa'īd offers a spiritual hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*) of such topics as the movements and words in prayer, purification and the purifier and the cleansing of the soul from spiritual illnesses. This book also includes one of the most profound commentaries upon the symbolism of the Ka'bah, sacred space and sacred geometry.

The second section, *Ta'liqāt bar uthūlūjiyā* (Commentary on the *Enneads*), features an especially interesting philosophical text that has been hitherto mostly unknown to the Western audience. This commentary represents the height of Shi'i-gnostic interpretation of Greek thought where Qāḍī Sa'īd focuses on the First Principle, knowledge and its hierarchy, and the ascending and descending journeys of the soul.

Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī is the last sage of the School of Isfahan included in this volume. The work included here is Ardistānī's *al-Ḥikmah al-Ṣādiqiyyah* (Ṣādiqian Wisdom) which begins with a discussion of the soul and its faculties. It continues with a survey of the actions and passions of the soul, its theoretical and practical faculties, and the problem of the essential unity of the soul while it possesses multiple faculties.

The Qajar period and the School of Tehran constitutes Part Three of this *Anthology*. While the notable figures of this school have been alluded to in a biographical fashion by such figures as S. H. Nasr and H. Corbin in various works on the history of Islamic philosophy, this is the first time that the writings of some of the major figures from the Qajar period and the School of Tehran are being presented in translation to a Western audience.

The first section is devoted to Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī, a Sufi mystic as well as a philosopher, whose *Mīzān al-ṣawāb dar sharḥ faṣl al-khiṭāb* (The Measure of Good

in the Elucidation of the Subject of Rhetoric) has been presented. The title of this treatise suggests that it concerns 'rhetoric', but Nayrīzī begins with a discussion of the concept of Being and continues with the problem of the Divine Attributes. In light of the relationship between the Reality of Being and the Attributes of God, Nayrīzī alludes to such topics as different modalities of Being, the nature of Necessary Being, the emanation of light and other illuminationist concepts. Throughout this treatise, Nayrīzī offers philosophical and gnostic poetry which beautifies the work both in form and style.

The second part of this section is comprised of Mullā Ismā'īl Khājū'i's *Ibtāl al-zamān al-mawhūm* (On the Refutation of Illusory Time). This treatise begins with an examination of Mīr Dāmād's view on time, eternity, and motion and their relationship. In treating the subject of motion extensively, Khājū'i quotes not only Mīr Dāmād's various views on the subject, but also refers to sayings of the Shi'i Imams as well as works of such figures as Ghazzālī and Ṭūsī.

The third chapter of the section in the Qajar period and the School of Tehran is devoted to Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and his *Sharḥ asrār al-āyāt* (Glosses upon the Secrets of [Qur'ānic] Verses) which are essentially marginal notes or glosses (*ta'liqāt*) upon the *Asrār al-āyāt* of Mullā Ṣadrā. Here, we see a treatment of such subjects as human nature and its receptivity for the understanding of Reality, spiritual emanation, transformation of one's being through the acquiring of knowledge and virtue, and an analysis of the concept of Muḥammadan Light. Spiritual hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*) of a number of key issues pertaining to eschatology such as spiritual annihilation (*fanā'*) and resurrection, intellect and the circle of existence are among other subjects treated here.

We next turn our attention to Hājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, the grand master and most famous figure of this period, whose illustrious writings and commentaries contributed significantly to the revival of Ṣadrian and Suhrawardian philosophy during the Qajar period. Despite the variety that one can see in Sabzawārī's writings including his philosophical poetry, due to the limitation of space here, we have only included a major section of his magnum opus: *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* (Commentary on a 'Philosophical Poem'). This text summarizes the principles of Ṣadrian philosophy represented in Arabic poems to which Sabzawārī himself wrote a commentary. While a variety of philosophical subjects are treated here, the special focus of emphasis is ontology.

In the first eight sections, Sabzawārī treats a variety of issues central to Islamic philosophy including: the self-evident nature of existence; the reality of existence; that existence is analogical; existence as something added to essence; the principiality and gradation of existence; that the Absolute is Pure Being; the variety of opinions regarding unity and multiplicity; mental existence and the definition of the secondary intelligible. The last part of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of unity and multiplicity.

Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī and his *al-Lama’āt al-ilāhiyyah* (Divine Flashes of Light) is the subject of the chapter that follows. Continuing with the subject of *wujūd*, Zunūzī begins his treatise by offering an elucidation of the nature of existence as pure good as asserted by Ibn Sīnā, quiddities, evil and its relation to accidents and presence in creation, non-existence and finally the Divine lights. In this brief section, Zunūzī tries to build a bridge between the earlier views of the Peripatetics, especially Ibn Sīnā, and the more gnostic Suhrawardian-Ṣadrian perspective.

We next turn to Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī (Zunūzī), the author of a major work on philosophy in Persian entitled *Badāyi’ al-ḥikam* (Marvels of Wisdom). He is considered by many as the principle founder of the School of Tehran. He is also the first Persian philosopher in this period to mention a European philosopher, Immanuel Kant, and to provide some brief remarks about him.

Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī, another of the founding members of the School of Tehran is the philosopher to whom we have devoted the next chapter. There we have included two treatises by Qumsha’ī: *Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd bal al-mawjūd* (Treatise on the Oneness of Existence, or rather, the Existent) and *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: Dar mabāḥith-i walāyat* (Addendum to the Ringstone on Seth: from ‘The Ringstones of Wisdom’ [of ibn ‘Arabī]: On the Topics of Friendship).

In the treatise on *waḥdat al-wujūd*, Qumsha’ī offers an explanation of the concept of *wujūd* and various philosophical concepts used by Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. Qumsha’ī, who is considered the foremost authority of his day on Ibn ‘Arabian gnosis clarifies the distinction between a concept that is *lā bi-shart* (unconditional), or ‘not having any conditions’; and one that is *bi-shart-i lā*, negatively conditioned, or ‘having the condition of ‘negation.’ Qumsha’ī’s elaboration of Ibn ‘Arabī’s concept of *wujūd* in its unqualified (*muṭlaq*) sense whether by unqualifiedness (*iṭlāq*) or by qualifiedness (*taqyīd*) is a fascinating and lucid philosophical discussion. Qumsha’ī follows Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī’s rendition of this argument in the form of the concepts of *lā-ta’ayyun*, the Non-entification (the Unknown Essence of the Real in itself) and *al-ta’ayyun al-awwal*, the First Entification (God as the Self-Disclosing Real).

The second and much longer treatise published here, with the Persian title *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: Dar mabāḥith-i walāyat*, is divided into two parts: first, an introduction on the nature of spiritual ‘friendship’ (*walāyat*) and second, a detailed exposition of Qaysarī’s commentary on the relevant passages from the chapter on Seth from the *Fuṣūṣ*. Qumsha’ī’s work represents a synthesis of Ṣadrian philosophy and the gnosis of Ibn ‘Arabī.

Mīrzā Abu’l Ḥasan Ṭabāṭabā’ī, known as ‘Jilwah’ (Splendour), is the subject of the next chapter. Jilwah’s works represent some of the best examples of later Islamic Peripatetic philosophical literature and marks the continuity, through many centuries in both form and content, of a living philosophical tradition in Persia.

Jilwah kept the torch of Ibn Sinan philosophy burning while giving it a Shi'i-gnostic flavour in the direction of the unification of the theoretical and practical aspects of philosophy. In this chapter, we have brought to light for the first time a translation of *Rasā'il falsafiyyah* (Philosophical Epistles) in which Ḥakīm Jilwah comments on a variety of traditional topics in metaphysics especially causality, quiddity and the question of existence. He also offers a discourse concerning the affirmation of the existence of archetypal forms in bodies, and that they are substances as well as how a single concept is derivable from distinct and diverse realities.

I have been collaborating with Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr on this project for nearly three decades. It has been an arduous journey both logistically and intellectually. A project that Professor Nasr had begun in Iran in the late 1970s, was interrupted by the political upheavals of 1978–1979; but the lack of a major scholarly anthology of the main contributions of Persian philosophers provided the impetus to begin the work from scratch here in America.

The task of locating and selecting the required texts was daunting enough, but finding scholars who were sufficiently well-versed in philosophy and linguistically competent in Arabic, Persian and English proved to be equally challenging. We were fortunate to assemble an international team of translators from various parts of the globe who were able and willing to contribute to this series.

The editors hope and trust that the five volumes of *An Anthology of Philosophy Persia* provide a comprehensive source book for scholars and students interested in the major figures and texts of the philosophical traditions of Persia.

M. Aminrazavi

I

The School of Shiraz

Introduction

Scholarship of the past few decades has made clear the centrality of Shiraz and its environs in the philosophical life of Persia between the eighth/fourteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries and has been witness to the establishment of the usage of the term the School of Shiraz. As Khurasan waned as the centre of Islamic philosophy in the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, Azarbaijan became the centre of philosophical activity for over a century and was where such major figures as Suhrawardī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī were either born, or carried out their philosophical activities. But during the aftermath of the Mongol invasion social and political conditions became such that the province of Fars with its capital Shiraz became the main centre of intellectual and also artistic activity in Persia. The Atābakān dynasty in Fars preserved Fars to a large extent from the Mongol onslaught and the Āl-i Jalāyir, Āl-i Muẓaffar and Āl-i Quyūnlū continued to make this province a relatively safe and peaceful place for the flourishing of the arts and sciences, for the religious sciences and for Sufism and philosophy. Scholars and students came to Shiraz from near and far to teach and to learn. By the time of Tamerlane Shiraz was recognized throughout the eastern lands of Islam as the premier centre of learning and the arts and the Tīmūrīds who succeeded Tamerlane continued to support the intellectual and artistic activities of that city.

It was during the period associated with the School of Shiraz that perhaps the greatest poets of the Persian language, Sa'dī and Ḥāfīz, appeared on the scene in that city. Sa'dī wrote many poems on the intellectual life of his native city while Ḥāfīz, who was not only born but also lived his whole life in Shiraz, hardly travelling anywhere else, in contrast to his compatriot Sa'dī who was a world traveller, celebrated in immortal verses the spiritual and intellectual ambience of his beloved city of birth. In one of his most famous verses he writes,

Joyous is Shiraz and its peerless state,
O God preserve it from destruction.

Come to Shiraz and the emanation of the Holy Spirit,
Seek from its people, possessors of perfection.

Through these two poets alone the fame of Shiraz spread during the very lifetime of the School of Shiraz not only throughout the Persian-speaking world, but also throughout India and the Ottoman world from Bengal to Europe.

During the centuries marking the life of the School of Shiraz as the centre of philosophical activity in Persia, Shiraz was also a remarkable focus of cultural activity not only in the field of Persian literature, but also in art. It was during this period that the Shiraz School of miniature painting developed, reaching its peak during the Tīmūrid period when, along with the Schools of Herat and Tabriz, it produced some of the greatest masterpieces of the Persian art of miniature painting. Nor was artistic activity in Shiraz limited to painting. Important architectural creations saw the light of day and gardens of remarkable beauty were created, gardens that became world famous. The profound influence of the intellectual and cultural activities of Shiraz on Muslim India and the Ottoman world can be seen not only in the fields of philosophy and the sciences, but also in the arts from painting to landscaping. When we think of the School of Shiraz, we must remain aware of the vibrant cultural and artistic ambience in which philosophical activity proper took place.

With this truth in mind let us now turn to the religious and theological situation of Shiraz during the period under consideration here. At the beginning of this period Shiraz, like the rest of Persia, was predominantly Sunni but while Ismailism had declined with the destruction of Alamūt and other Ismaili centres by Mongols, Twelver Shi'ism was on the rise especially after Uljāyṭū embraced this form of Islam and took the name Sultan Muḥammad Khudābandah. Between the eighth/fourteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries there were still many Sunni religious scholars in Shiraz but Shī'ī ones began also to appear. As far as Ash'arite theology is concerned, Shiraz became in fact the main centre for its cultivation and many of the major works of *kalām*, as already discussed in Volume Three of this *Anthology*, were associated with Shiraz—works of such figures as Taftāzānī, Ījī, Jurjānī and Dawānī that are still part of the curriculum for the teaching of *kalām* in centres of Sunni learning such as al-Azhar university in Cairo and the Qarawīyyīn in Fez. Shiraz was also the site during this period for the composition of major Qur'ānic commentaries that are studied widely to this day by Sunni and Shi'a alike, such as *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta'wīl* (Lights of Revelation and Secrets of Hermeneutic Commentary) by Qāḍī Bayḍāwī upon which many commentaries were written by such men as Dawānī, Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī and Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī. Shiraz was also a major centre for the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence at this time. The founder of the Akhbārī School in Shi'ism, Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī, in fact studied in Shiraz.

As for Sufism, Shiraz and its environs had been centres of Sufism before the seventh/thirteenth century producing such major figures as Ḥallāj, Ibn Khafīf, Abū

Ishāq Kāzīrūnī and Rūzbahān Baqlī. In fact, from the seventh/thirteenth century onward Shiraz gained the title of Burj al-awliyā', the 'Tower of Saints'. The first famous philosopher of Shiraz, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, who might be considered as the prelude to the School of Shiraz, although his philosophical activities were carried out elsewhere, received his initiation into Sufism at a young age in that city. This tradition continued in strength during the later centuries associated with the School of Shiraz. During this period there appeared such Sufi figures as Awḥad al-Dīn Kāzīrūnī, Shāh Dā'ī Shīrāzī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Lāhijī, Khwājah Muḥammad Dihdār and Bābā Rukn al-Dīn Bayḍāwī Shīrāzī, some of whom were born in Fars while others studied and taught there. Moreover, some of these well-known figures were also masters of doctrinal Sufism associated with the School of Ibn 'Arabī, as amply demonstrated by the famous commentary of Bābā Rukn al-Dīn on the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) of Ibn 'Arabī and the commentary of Lāhijī on the *Gulshan-i rāz* (The Secret Garden of Divine Mystery) of Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistārī, which is one of the masterpieces of doctrinal Sufism and gnosis in Persian.

It was in this very rich and diverse intellectual, religious and artistic ambience that the philosophical School of Shiraz had its genesis and flourished. Let us then turn to some of the general characteristics of this school in which there was the presence of all the major schools of earlier Islamic thought from both Sunni and Shī'ī *kalām* to Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) and Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophy to 'irfān or gnosis to the various Islamic mathematical, medical and natural sciences. It is interesting to note that while later philosophers of the Schools of Isfahan and Tehran were not notable scientists, even if they knew something of Islamic mathematical, natural and medical sciences, some of the philosophers of the School of Shiraz were notable scientists and followed the tradition of earlier Muslim philosopher-scientists such as al-Kindī, Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī who were both major philosophers and notable scientists.

The history of science of the period associated with the School of Shiraz has yet to be written and there is still much to discover and unearth in this field. Yet, even with the incomplete knowledge that we now have, we can observe the significant contributions to science and medicine in the works of a number of philosophers of this school. For example, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī was also a notable scientist. Shams al-Dīn Khafri's commentary upon the *Tadhkirah* (Treasury of Astronomy) of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī is a major scientific work that is of great importance in the history of later post-Ptolemaic astronomy. Furthermore, Faṭḥ Allāh Shīrāzī, who migrated from Shiraz to India, was not only a philosopher but also a significant scientist and engineer. During this period not only Shiraz but also such other cities and towns of Fars as Bayḍā', Īj, Karbāl, Lār, Fasā, Dawān and Khafr were centres where both philosophy and the sciences were taught and studied.

This scientific dimension of the School of Shiraz is not unrelated to the concern of so many philosophers of this school with logic. For example, there seems to

have been special interest at this time in certain logical paradoxes such as 'the liar's paradox'. Several treatises were written during this period on this difficult subject and it might be said that these philosophers created a new chapter in the history of Islamic logic and did not simply repeat the formal logic formulated on the basis of Aristotelian logic by such earlier figures as Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, whose works were of course well known to the philosophers of the School of Shiraz.

Until quite recently little attention had been paid by not only Western but also Persian scholars to the School of Shiraz and it was considered that this period was characterized merely by the appearance of commentaries, glosses and super commentaries on earlier philosophical works and possessed no originality. Modern scholars paid attention only to the form in which many philosophical works were written, that is, commentaries and glosses, but not to their content. However, the greater attention paid to the School of Isfahan and such figures as Mullā Ṣadrā necessitated paying more attention to what we now call the School of Shiraz and to the closer study of not only independent works but also the commentaries and glosses of this period that had been so readily neglected and even dismissed earlier. The resulting change of perspective among scholars, combined with greater availability of hitherto neglected texts, have brought out the significance of the philosophical activity of the School of Shiraz and the presence of significant philosophical creativity therein. It is true that the School of Shiraz did not produce an Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī or Mullā Ṣadrā. But even now, when the period from the seventh/thirteenth to the tenth/sixteenth centuries remains the least known of various periods of the history of Islamic philosophy, we have enough knowledge to assert that the School of Shiraz marks a very important period in the life of Islamic philosophy, important not only because of its influence on the School of Isfahan as well as the intellectual life of Muslim India and the Ottoman world, but also due to its own innate philosophical significance.

One of the most pertinent features of the School of Shiraz is that it was mostly, if not wholly, here, that for the first time various schools of Islamic thought interacted with each other philosophically. This assertion should not be understood to mean, however, that this interaction did not take place in a significant manner elsewhere, as we see in the works of such figures as Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī and Ibn Turkah, who belong to the same period but not to the circle of Shiraz or even before them in the century that preceded immediately the era of the School of Shiraz, as we see in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī. In fact the period between the seventh/thirteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries in the history of Islamic philosophy in Persia is characterized by attempts by several thinkers at a synthesis of various schools of Islamic thought. This fact holds true not only for Persia, but also elsewhere in the eastern lands of Islam as we see, for example, in the case of Dāwūd Qayṣarī who hailed from Anatolia.

We have had occasion to mention in earlier volumes of this *Anthology* what the different schools of Islamic thought whose integration was sought in the School of

Shiraz were, but it is nevertheless necessary to summarize them here. By the eighth/fourteenth century when the School of Shiraz came into being in earnest, over seven centuries of Islamic history had passed. Throughout this period the rich Islamic intellectual tradition had been fully active and had already brought major schools of thought to full fruition. In the field of Sunni *kalām*, although the Mu'tazilite School had been eclipsed, the Ash'arite School was in full swing and philosophical *kalām* had already produced such masters as Juwaynī, Ghazzālī, Shahrastānī and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī. Ismaili thought, both philosophical and *kalāmī*, had already had its golden age with such figures as Abū Ḥātim Rāzī, Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Twelver Shī'ī *kalām* had already produced its greatest masters in Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī and 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī. The Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) School, associated most of all with Ibn Sīnā, had been revived, after a period of eclipse, by Ṭūsī followed by many other figures including Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī. The School of Illumination (*ishrāq*) had already been established by Suhrawardī and the two major commentaries on the basic text of this school, that is, *Hikmat al-ishrāq* (Theosophy of the Orient of Light), had already been written by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shahrāzūrī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī. The school of doctrinal Sufism or '*irfān*' had also been already established by Ibn 'Arabī and was further elucidated by such seminal figures of this school as Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, Mu'ayyad al-Dīn Jandī, 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī and many others. This very rich tapestry of thought provided the background for the appearance of the School of Shiraz whose masters had access to the writings and ideas of all these earlier schools.

The prelude and postlude to the School of Shiraz proper were two major philosophers who were from Shiraz but whose philosophical activities were carried out to a large extent elsewhere. The first was Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the other Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā) both of whom were born and received their early education in Shiraz but left that city at a young age. Some have nevertheless considered them as part of the School of Shiraz but they are really the prelude and postlude of this School as we have defined it in this work. Therefore, we dealt with Quṭb al-Dīn earlier in a previous volume and shall deal with Mullā Ṣadrā later in this volume in the section on the School of Isfahan.

The School of Shiraz itself may be said to have begun its activities with Mīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, the patriarch of a family that produced numerous known philosophers, more than any other single family in the history of Islamic philosophy. Ṣadr al-Dīn also known as Sayyid-i Sanad was a notable philosopher who also influenced Mullā Ṣadrā. In fact some of the works of Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī were wrongly attributed by later figures to Mullā Ṣadrā because of the similarity of their names. Dashtakī's son, Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī, is perhaps the greatest philosopher of the School of Shiraz for whom the father established the Maṣṣūriyyah *madrasah* in Shiraz where many later philosophers also studied. This *madrasah* is still extant and its fame continues to this day not only in Persia

but also in the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent. Ghiyāth al-Dīn's son, the second Ṣadr al-Dīn or Ṣadr al-Dīn-i Thānī, was also a famous philosopher, and was followed by a number of other philosophers in the family, some of whom migrated to other lands from India to Arabia, spreading the influence of the School of Shiraz far and wide.

Another major figure of the School of Shiraz was Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī who was a kind of philosophical rival to the Dashtakīs. At once a theologian and philosopher, well versed in both the Peripatetic and Illuminationist Schools, an ethicist and literary figure, he wielded wide influence even in his own lifetime not only in Persia but also in the Ottoman world and later on in the Subcontinent. His commentary on the *Hayākil al-nūr* (Temples of Light) of Suhrawardī and his independent work *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (Jalālīan Ethics), based on the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (Nāṣirīan Ethics) of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, is still widely read and studied in Pakistan and Muslim India while his treatises on philosophical *kalām* still enjoy popularity in Turkey and certain Arab countries.

A full treatment of the School of Shiraz would have to include not only Shams al-Dīn Khafrī to whom a section is devoted in this volume, but also numerous other figures such as Mullā 'Abd Allāh Yazdī, Muqaddas-i Ardabilī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Shīrāzī, Faṭḥ Allāh Shīrāzī, Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shīrāzī, whom some believe to have been the teacher of the young Mullā Ṣadrā when the latter was still in Shiraz, and many others whose works are being gradually discovered, printed and studied along with so many hitherto neglected writings of better known figures of the School of Shiraz. For example, the two Dihdārs, Maḥmūd, the father, and Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd the son, who wrote so many important works on both Sufism (including the science of *jafr*) as well as philosophy not to speak of poetry, are being rediscovered as their treatises become publicly available and more widely studied.

Before leaving the School of Shiraz a word must be said about the question of language in the works produced by this School. As already mentioned in this and also in earlier volumes, the number of works written in the domain of philosophy in Persian and not only in Arabic continued to increase in Persia from the early efforts of Ibn Sīnā and the Ismaili philosophers, especially Nāṣir-i Khusraw, to Suhrawardī, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī. This tendency continued in the School of Shiraz. Although the Persian texts of this school are not as significant as those of Suhrawardī, Bābā Afḍal, Ṭūsī, and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, many notable philosophical texts in Persian were produced in the School of Shiraz by such men as Dawānī and Muḥammad Dihdār not to speak of the followers of this school in India. The philosophers of this School, therefore, made important contributions to the rich tradition of Islamic philosophy written in the Persian language.

In conclusion one might ask what the significance of the School of Shiraz is in Islamic intellectual history seen in its totality. First of all, this School covers some

three centuries of the history of Islamic philosophy, theology and doctrinal Sufism, during which many works of innate philosophical significance were produced. Secondly, this School played a major role in preparing the background for the establishment and flowering of the School of Isfahan. The great role of the School of Shiraz in this matter becomes ever more evident as the works of this school become better known and studied more extensively. Thirdly, this school had a central influence upon philosophical activity in Ottoman Turkey and as the intellectual history of the Ottoman world becomes better known, its link to the School of Shiraz also becomes more evident. Finally, the extension of the teachings of the School of Shiraz into Muslim India is central to the whole development of the intellectual tradition of the Muslims of the Subcontinent. Knowledge of this school is, therefore, of central importance not only for the understanding of the later history of Islamic philosophy in Persia, but also for a more complete appreciation of the unfolding of the history of Islamic philosophy in general.

S. H. Nasr

Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn As‘ad Dawānī was one of the most significant figures of the School of Shiraz. He was born in the province of Fars in 830/1427 in the town of Dawān, near today’s city of Kāzirūn. Towards the end of his life, having served in different positions both administrative and academic, he retired to his birthplace a year before the Safavids captured Shiraz. He died and was buried in Dawān in 908/1502. His first teacher was his father, who had himself been taught by Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (d. 816/1413). Dawānī continued his studies in philosophy, theology and law in Shiraz but little is known about his teachers there. He later taught in the Begum *madrasah* (Dār al-Aytām) in Shiraz, where he became well known for his mastery of the intellectual sciences.

Dawānī was highly respected both at the Ottoman court in Istanbul for his writings on Sunni *kalām* (theology) and by the Persian kings who appointed him to religious offices. His fame in philosophy, theology and the religious sciences gained him a great deal of respect from the political authorities of the court of Uzun Ḥasan and Sultan Ya‘qūb. His intellectual acumen resulted in his appointment as a judge (*qāḍī*) and even helped him reach the rank of minister. In acknowledgment, he dedicated many of his works to Āq-Quyunlū and other Tīmūrīd rulers and princes of Persia.

A great deal of debate and many fanciful stories have surrounded Dawānī’s religious beliefs. He wrote theological treatises from both the Sunni and Shi‘i points of view, but appears to have professed an attachment to Twelver Shi‘ism in one of his later works entitled *Nūr al-hidāyah* (Light of Guidance). In any case, one has to understand his religious affiliation within the context of Iranian Islam at the time, which was marked by a strongly Shi‘i-influenced Sunnism. Despite what appears to have been a change in his religious affiliation in the last part of his life in favour of Shi‘ism, Dawānī has remained an influential figure in both the Sunni and the Shi‘i worlds over the centuries. Besides Persia and the Ottoman world, he has also been well known in Muslim India, where his writings remain popular and are taught in traditional *madrasahs* to this day.

Some seventy works of Dawānī, in both Arabic and Persian, have survived, many of which are concerned with philosophy, theology and ethics. His most famous work is a treatise written in Persian, entitled *Lawāmi‘ al-ishrāq fi makārim al-akhlāq* (Sparks of Illumination in the Virtues of Ethics), also known as *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (Jalālīan Ethics). This work is based on Ṭūsī’s *Naṣīrian Ethics*, but it also contains illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) themes culled from Suhrawardī, and elaborations using verses from the Qur’ān, *ḥadīth*, and sayings of Sufi masters.

Having identified the moral ideal with the religious one, Dawānī declares that it is man’s moral imperative to become ‘the vice-gerent of God on earth’ (*khalīfat Allāh fi’l-arḍ*), which is part of the Qur’ānic account of the nature and function of man. Dawānī follows Ṭūsī’s model in the *Naṣīrian Ethics* and divides his work into three sections: ethics, economics and politics. He then further subdivides the work, following Ṭūsī’s divisions, but omits Ṭūsī’s theoretical first section of the work entirely.

Dawānī’s comments on politics include advice to kings that evoke the characterization of Plato’s philosopher-king, a ruler who demonstrates ideal virtues. His descriptions of the ideal ruler and the titles used therein seem to have been written for its dedicatee, the Āq-Quyunlū, Uzun Ḥasan.

In other traditional areas of philosophy, such as metaphysics and cosmology, Dawānī was a Peripatetic who for the most part closely followed the ideas of Avicenna, especially with regard to ontology. He also espoused the theory of the emanation of the First Intellect from the Necessary Being and the emanation of the other nine intellects from each other. He wrote several treatises on logic in addition to *mashshā‘ī* and *ishrāqī* philosophy.

Dawānī wrote a series of philosophical glosses on the commentary by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qūshchī (879/1474) on Ṭūsī’s *Tajrid al-kalām* (Catharsis of Theology). In his works Dawānī engaged in philosophical debates with his contemporary, Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, and later with Dashtakī’s son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn. These discourses took place within a Suhrawardian philosophical world, and they were all influenced to some extent by Suhrawardī’s *ishrāqī* doctrine. While Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, as an extreme essentialist, denied reality to existence, both mentally and externally, Dawānī held the view (similar to Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī) that Being in the external world is a single necessary reality, absolutely devoid of multiplicity.

Another of Dawānī’s essential works is *Shawākil al-ḥūr* (Forms of Angels), which is his commentary on Suhrawardī’s *Hayākil al-nūr*. This work of Dawānī became instrumental in the spread of the School of *ishrāq* in India. In Persia itself, Dawānī continued to engage in extensive debates with Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī on the major philosophical questions of *ishrāqī* doctrine. Ṣadr al-Dīn’s son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī, also entered the philosophical fray, and opposed Dawānī in many ways. Ghiyāth al-Dīn wrote several critical responses to Dawānī’s work, including *Ishrāq-i hayākil al-nūr* (Illumination upon ‘The Temples of Light’), which is a

trenchant rebuttal to Dawānī's commentary upon the *Hayākil al-nūr*. During this period, Dawānī also wrote a number of theological works, including glosses upon the *Sharḥ al-tajrīd*. In the long tradition of philosophers who also wrote poetry, he wrote poems in both Arabic and Persian, many of which are of a Sufi nature; he even wrote a commentary upon one of the *ghazals* of Ḥāfiẓ.

Dawānī was among the relatively small number of later Muslim philosophers interested in the natural sciences. In his *Unmūdhaj al-ʿulūm* (Samples of the Sciences), he comments on magnetism and why a magnet attracts iron filings. He also wrote a commentary upon the astronomical work of Chaqmīnī.

In this chapter we have included Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī's *Risālat al-zawrā'* (The Treatise of Baghdad). This brief treatise provides a discussion on causality in its various modalities, existence and non-existence and whether they are accidental or essential in nature.

M. Aminrazavi

THE TREATISE OF BAGHDAD

*Risālat al-Zawrā*¹

Translated for this volume by Nariman Aavani from Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī, ‘Risālat al-Zawrā’, in *al-Rasā’il al-mukhtārāt*, ed. S. A. Tūsirkānī (Isfahan, 1364 Sh./1986), pp. 81–87.

He suffices me in all states and in His hands are the reins of all aspirations. It is He who glorifies Himself for Himself and through His friend by Himself. And blessings be from Him upon that spiritual rank that encompasses all His attributes.

These are some fragments of the truths, nay rather, they are the quintessence of subtle points, disclosing the secrets of analogies (*tashbihāt*) founded upon allusions, which awaken the slumberers on the beds of negligence, caught in the darkness of the night of veils and ignorance. Verily the morning has broken and the herald of truth has called out ‘Hasten towards salvation’. The sun of truth has well-nigh risen from the West and the similitudes reported from the tongues of the prophets are about to come true in their cited location.

As for [this treatise], it is written in a new style, in an apposite fashion. One who glances upon it shall bear witness to this fact. The eternal Mercy of God has brought it to the light of day in response to the intrinsic demands (*du‘ā’*) invoked by the tongue of preparedness (*isti‘ādā*). And God is the Guide to the path of righteousness. *Lo! Thy Lord is ever watchful* (89:14).²

Prologue (*tamhīd*)

The cause of a thing in reality is that which is the means for the obtaining of the thing itself. For that which is the cause for its manifestation for example, is not in reality a cause for it, nay rather, [it is the cause] for one of its attributes, which is manifest. And quiddities and the non-generatedness (*ghayr maj‘ūlah*) of quiddities, in the sense that a human being’s being human for example is not in need of the efficient cause, does not negate what we have mentioned, since we mean by it that [the quiddities] in their essences are the effect (*athar*) of the efficient cause. And after that they do not need another cause (*ta’tihir*) in order to be what they are, and the negation of the latter need does not negate the former need. So consider it well.

1. ‘al-Zawrā’ is another name for Baghdad.

2. Qur’ān translations are from Pickthall except where noted otherwise.

A Reminder and An Insight (*tadhkirah wa istibṣār*)

Has it not become evident for you through that which you have heard in conventional philosophy that the origination (*ḥudūth*) of a thing from nothing is impossible that the same is the case for essential origination as well? How easy it is for you to surmise that. Therefore, the effect is not totally different in its essence from the cause, and [the effect] is not a reality for itself, but rather by its essence it belongs to the essence of the cause and is one among its many aspects, facets, modalities and so forth for other appropriate considerations (*al-i'tibārāt al-lā'iqah*).

Elucidation (*tabṣirah*)

The effect, therefore, is nothing but a purely mentally-posed entity. When considered from the point of view of its relation to the cause and in the respect that it is related to [the cause], it is real; but if it is considered as an independent entity, it is non-existent, nay rather, impossible.

Analogy (*tashbīh*)

Blackness, if considered in the respect that it is in a body, that is to say as an external configuration (*hay'ah*) of the body, is existent; and if considered as an independent entity, it is non-existent, nay, even impossible. And a garment, if considered to be a form in the cotton, is existent; and if considered to be totally different from the cotton, as an independent entity, [it] would be impossible in that regard. So make this a criterion for all realities and you shall know the meaning of the saying of the one¹ who said: 'The immutable essences (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*) have not smelled the perfume of being, and verily they have never and shall never be manifested, but rather what is manifested is only a trace of them.'

Allusion (*tanbīh*)

Since the ultimate end of the chain of causality is one, because all are His effects either immediately or through an intermediary, therefore He is the real essence and everything else is His aspects, modalities, facets and so forth for other appropriate considerations. Thus, there are not multiple essences in [the realm of] existence, nay rather, there is only one single essence that possesses multiple attributes. As God the Most Exalted says: *He is God, than Whom there is no God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace, the Cause of security, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb* (59:23).²

1. That is, Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240).

2. Trans. Pickthall, modified.

Another Reminder (*tadhkirah ukhrā*)

From what you have come to know in speculative philosophy, it is as if you have realized that it is impossible for a thing to become non-existent all at once (*bi'l-marrah*). And you have realized that, since every contingent being is capable of non-existence in its essence, the negation of that which is the essence in reality is not permissible. This is because everything which can cease to exist has inevitably originated from a permanent essence and ends in that for which the possibility of non-existence is not admissible; for otherwise there has to be another origin for it and this will lead to an infinite regress. Therefore, *All things are perishing save His Countenance* (28:88).¹ The Necessary Being is one, and so all contingent beings are unified in that ever-enduring origin, *Everyone that is thereon shall pass away and there remaineth but the Countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory* (55:26).

Allusion (*tanbīh*)

Thus, the cessation of the effect in reality is the appearance of the cause in another mode and its manifestation in a relative aspect that is different from the first aspect. Therefore, [the cessation of the effect] is the concomitant cessation (*muzāyalah*) of the cause in its modifications (*i'tibārāt*) and its transformation in the multifarious aspects (*shu'ūn*) of its essence.

The Elimination of an Illusion and the Bestowal of an Understanding (*izāḥat al-wahm wa ifādat al-fahm*)

The relation between the first and the second is the mother of all relations; no relation is in reality similar to it, and no relation is totally different from it. And all that has been said or shall be said to bring this relation closer to understanding, in one respect makes it more remote [from our understanding], in the sense that considering it to correspond to the reality of the matter makes it more remote, and considering it in that aspect by virtue of which it is appropriate brings it closer. Therefore, do not surmise that He, Exalted be He, is the matter for the possible beings, or that to which they adhere as accidents, and so forth for other considerations that verbal expressions deceptively make us imagine. For it is not the case that what the eyes of the thirsty desire would quench the thirst.

Verily, the garment woven from the cloth of nine and twenty letters is deficient in revealing His perfections.

Unfolding a Mystery (*baṣṭ wiṭā'*)²

If you consider temporal extension (*al-imtidād al-zamānī*), which is the origin (*maḥṭid*) of change and alteration and the seat of the temporally originated entities

1. Trans. Pickthall, modified.

2. Literally, 'laying a spread'.

(*al-ḥawādith al-kawniyyah*), along with all the temporally originated entities that are associated with it, all as one [reality], you will find it to be one of the aspects (*shu'ūn*) of the First Cause, encompassing all other successive aspects (*shu'ūn*). Then, if you scrutinize [the matter] attentively, you will find that sequence with regard to the presence or absence of the boundaries (*ḥudūd*) of that extension in relation to the temporal entities (*zamāniyyāt*) occurs under its scope. And as for the levels that are beyond it, there is no succession with respect to them, but rather they all have the same relation to it and are parallel in their presence for it. So what do you think of the loftiest peaks of the sublime heights (*al-ʿawālī*)? There is no dawn or dusk for your Lord.

Analogy (*tashbīh*)

If you take an extended object, such as a [piece of] wood, each part of which is different in colour, and then move it in front of an ant or something similar, which has a scope of vision too narrow to encompass (*iḥāṭah*) that extended object in its entirety, is it not the case that those different colours are present to it consecutively due to the narrowness of its vision, while they are equal in their presence for you due to your power to encompass? *So learn a lesson, O ye who have eyes!* (59:2)

Lifting a Veil (*kashf al-ghīṭāʾ*)

Perhaps in unfolding this mystery the veil has been lifted for you, and you have come to know precious secrets, from the face of the beauty of the realities of which the veil of undifferentiation (*ijmāl*) had not until now been lifted, and you have investigated the ascents of lights that had not until now risen from their orients:

Among which is the manner of encompassing of the knowledge of the First, Exalted be He, with respect to the past, future and present, such that He transcends any change and transition (*intiqāl*). And this is among [the points] that is hidden from many of the people of disputation, so that they have gone astray in the wilderness of error, and expanded the circle of idle talk (*qīl wa qāl*);

And among which is the quality of the coming into existence and cessation of temporally originated entities (*ḥawādith*). [This leads to] liberation from the paradox (*shubḥah*) that ensues from investigating its cause according to the methodology of the discursive philosophers (*ahl al-naẓar*), and [liberation] from the troublesome complications (*takallufāt*) to which they have committed themselves in this issue, as is consistent with their nature (*ṭibāʾ*) and is consonant with that which they have heard of the echoes of the ambiguous words of the ancients, the odiousness of which is not hidden from those whose [faculty of] taste has been purified from the bitterness of quarrel (*mirāʾ*), and whose insight is safe from the from the veil of disputation (*al-imtirāʾ*);

And among which is the mystery of abrogation (*naskh*) and its reality, and that it does not involve what is imagined to be a deficiency or a contradiction; for the

written commandment (*al-ḥukm al-tadwīnī*) is parallel to the cosmic commandment (*al-ḥukm al-takwīnī*). And just as there is succession there [only] in the eyes of those confined in the prison of time, who look out from the narrow aperture of the present moment, here likewise there is no change or transition [regarding abrogation] except in the eyes of those for whom the past, present and future differ.

Reminder (*tadhkirah*)

Is it not the case that one single reality appears to the sight with a particular form enclosed in material accidents (*al-ʿawāriḍ al-māddiyyah*), on condition of the presence of the matter and a particular position, such as its being opposite the eye, being [sufficiently] near, there being no obstacle and so forth. And [that reality] appears identically in the common sense (*al-ḥiss al-mushtarak*) with a form that resembles that [form] but without those conditions. And in both conditions it is susceptible to multiplicity (*takaththur*) in accordance with the individuals, such as the form of Zayd, ʿAmr and Bakr. Again, that [same] reality appears to you in the Intellect such that it is not susceptible to multiplicity, and the individuals (*al-afrād al-mutikaththirah*) that are multiple in their visible and imaginal forms become unified in their intelligible form. And then the intelligible form becomes varied in accepting multiplicity.

For the forms of the species from the point of view of the specificity (*khuṣūṣ*) of each species are multiple, and from the point of view of the form of their genus are one. And such is the case [in the hierarchy of species and genus] up to the supreme genus (*jins al-ajnās*). And thus, all the species are unified in its form, but it is distinguished from another genus that stands in opposition to it. And if you consider one of those concepts that encompass all realities (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*) and considerations (*al-iʿtibārāt*), all will be unified in its form, as for example, the [concepts] 'thing' (*al-shayʾ*) and 'general possible' (*al-mumkin al-ʿāmm*).

Elucidation (*tabṣirah*)

When you have noted this, then intuit (*taḥaddas*) that the form, even if it be intelligible, is other than the reality, or rather it is the different garments [of the reality], differing with the differences of the sensory organs and perceptual faculties. Then, that reality with its essential unity sometimes appears in multiple forms, of which the properties differ (as in the case of the forms of particular individuals), and sometimes appears as a single form (as in the case of the intelligible form). And just as two things that are different in form in one place (*mawṭin*)¹ are sometimes unified in a different place, [likewise] sometimes two forms become opposite in two places; in the sense that one of them appears with a particular form in one place and the other appears with another form in that place, and then they both appear in another place as the

1. The word *mawṭin* here means location in the most general sense possible, including spatial location and location within the levels of the various cognitive faculties.

opposites of the two forms, such that this one appears in the form that belonged to the other and the other appears in the form that belonged to this. An example of this is joyfulness appearing in a dream in the form of weeping, and so forth in the way of those matters that are known to us through the practice of dream interpretation. So master this perfectly, for this is an idea that is difficult to grasp.

Allusion (*tanbīh*)

In what you have heard in these introductory remarks, it is as if you have come to know the reality of the correspondence between the worlds. Nay rather, [you have come to know] the reality of the worlds. Nay rather, abstruse secrets have become manifest to you, such as the reality of the origin and the return; and the vision of the Real One (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqīqī*) in multiplicity has become easy for you, [a vision] free from the blemishes (*shawb*) of admixture (*mumāzajah*) and separation (*infīṣāl*). And you have ascended by it to the realities of which the tongues of the prophets have informed us, such as the appearance of deeds and character traits (*al-akhlāq*) in corporeal forms in the eschatological abodes (*mawāṭin*), and [you have come to realize] the manner of the weighing of deeds, and the secret of the resurrection of individuals in the forms of their predominant character traits (*al-akhlāq al-ghālibah*). And you have come to know the secret of His saying, Exalted be He, *Lo! Hell verily encompasses the disbelievers* (9:49; 29:54) and His saying, Exalted be He, *Lo! Those who devour the wealth of orphans wrongfully, they do but swallow fire into their bellies, and they will be exposed to burning flame* (4:10); and the saying of the inaugurator and completer [of prophecy] upon him be the best of blessings and salutations, ‘Those who drink from a vessel made out of gold and silver, verily the fire of hell gargles in their stomachs’; and his saying, blessings and peace be upon him, ‘Paradise is a pasture (*qīʿān*), the plants of which are ‘Glory be to God’ (*subḥān Allāh*) and ‘Praise belongs only to God’ (*al-ḥamd liʾLlāh*); and so forth for other inscrutable wise aphorisms and divine secrets. And you have come to know that all of this is reality, and is not metaphor or interpretation (*taʾwīl*) as is the view reached by some of those who are inclined to examine the truth in a purely discursive way. And this is a manifest deficiency, which is not concealed.

Investigating a Doubt (*shakk wa taḥqīq*)

You may say: how is it possible for an accident to be identical to a substance? And, how can they have the same meaning while the realities are different in their essences? To this we will say: we have hinted for you that the reality is other than the form. For [the reality] on the level of its essence and in its pure simplicity (*ṣarāfat sadhājatihā*) is devoid of all the forms in which it is manifest. However, it appears at one time in one form and at another time in another; and although the two forms are certainly different, the reality manifesting in the two forms, in accordance with the differences of their loci (*mawāṭin*), is a single thing.

Analogy (*tashbīh*)

How similar is this to the view of the speculative philosophers, that substances insofar as they exist in the mind are accidents subsisting in it (*qā'imah bihi*) and in need of it, and then in the external world [the substances] are autonomous (*qā'imah binafsihā*) and independent (*mustaghniyah*) from others. Thus, if you accept that the reality appears in one place (*mawṭin*) in a dependent accidental form, and in another [place] in the form of a distinct and independent substance, then become intimate with this [idea] so that you break the intensity of your aversion towards it in your first prima facie inspection *until certainty comes to you* (15:99),¹ and you ascend the clear horizon and see with the witnessing eye (*'ayn al-'iyān*) what language is unable to express, and you become cognizant (*tasharruf*) of the truth of the saying of our master, the prophet chosen to complete the structure of the prophetic message (*binā' al-naba' wa'l-inbā'*): 'Sleep is the brother of death'; and the saying of the possessor of his secret and the gate of the city of his knowledge, upon him and upon his family be the choicest blessings and peace: 'People are asleep and when they die they awake'.

An Additional Unveiling (*ziyādat al-kashf*)

Have you ever seen how the one single reality has appeared to the intellectual faculty in a single, unique, subtle, immaterial form, and then has appeared to the sense organs in a variegated dense material form. And it is as if it descends with the soul from the purity of its immateriality and unity towards density (*takaththuf*) and multiplicity. So, when the soul reaches the level of sense perception, it reaches the furthest limit of multiplicity, and when it ascends to the level of pure immateriality, it becomes one. Therefore, realities have an ascent and a descent with the soul, and they therefore exist within the soul and are not external to it. And [the soul] accompanies them in its different abodes (*mawāṭin*), and in each abode it takes the hue of (*tataṣabbagh*) the properties of [that abode] such as unity and multiplicity, subtlety and density. And for that reason I say: the nature of knowledge is multiplying the one and unifying the many.

A Mystery (*ramz*)

The distinction which is the origin of multiplicity is only by means of the soul and within the soul. So if you pay no heed to it and that which appears in it in the stages of its descent and the degrees of its ascent, you find nothing save one reality (*'ayn*) devoid of all distinction and otherness. Nay rather, you do not find what you find [and] when you find. So extinguish the lamp, for the morning has broken.

1. Translation is my own.

Allusion (*tanbīh*)

So, the soul, as has become evident, is the matter for all forms and the ground for all realities, from which grow their roots and in which their branches sprout; and it is the all-embracing book, the Greatest Name, the Encompassing Throne which is the seat of the All-Merciful, whose existentiating mercy (*al-rahmah al-ijādiyyah*) demands the manifestation (*zuhūr*) of all of the possible beings in their details; and by and in [the soul] the Breath of the All-Merciful (*al-nafas al-rahmānī*), which is in its essence (*fī ḥadd dhātihi*), becomes multiple. So the reality is one so long as it remains pure intellect, and when it moves downward and appears within the soul, [the soul] makes it multiple due to the essential aptitude that it possesses for accepting the properties of descending entities (*tanazzulāt*) so that [the soul] becomes number. And this is the meaning of the saying of the ancient masters among the philosophers: 'Number is the intellect in motion.' So know this, for the veil has been removed to the extent possible for it to be removed.

Supplement (*takmilah*)

Then, the soul, when the matter of manifestation has reached completion through its awareness (*shu'ūr*), begins the matter of making [others] aware using its breath, which is air, divided up through the divisions [caused by] letters. And just as the Breath of the All-Merciful has made itself manifest in [the soul] and through it the numerous forms of the realities, the human breath also, because of it, manifests the forms of the various words. And it is as if an echo of the root of the realities or an image of their forms has reflected from it due to the degree to which it has been polished. [This echo takes the form] that is appropriate to [those realities] in the human breath [that is, in words]. This is a result of the affinity between [the soul] and the animal spirit, which is the place in which it was first established. Then that echo does not return save to the soul, and those images do not appear except within it, so the entire affair has returned to the soul. And when [the soul] has returned to God the affair is complete. *Do not all things reach God at last?* (42:53)¹

Conclusion and Counsel (*al-khatm wa'l-waṣiyyah*)

I have laid down in these chapters some principles that, if you ascertain them, [will cause] all future ambiguous issues to become easy for you, and all hidden truths to become clear. So keep it from those who are not worthy of it and do not begrudge it to those who deserve it; because to abandon the first is to go astray and to mislead, and to perpetrate the second is an injustice and an error of grave consequence. You should take cognizance of the aptitudes and qualifications [of students] though long-established experience. Beware of being deceived by the outward appearance

1. Trans. Pickthall, modified by the translator.

of things. Such a category of people [as are qualified] are, indeed, more scarce than red sulphur and are not to be found except on very rare occasions.

And know that the delay caused for you when you convey [this treatise] to those worthy of it is easier than what would befall you if you divulge it to those unworthy of it; for the former is retardation and the latter is wastage. The retarded can be emended, but that which is wasted cannot. And know that we are living in an age in which envy and obdurate stubbornness are widespread, and ignorance and wilful persistence are disseminated in all regions. So be insightful in your affairs, with firm decisiveness both in private and in public. And be assured that divulging the truth to the unworthy is reprehensible in all spiritual paths. There are many prophetic forewarnings in this regard, corroborated by saintly allusions. Do not be of straitened chest [i.e. depressed] if someone detracts from your words. And be in conformity with the words of Plato: 'Do not let your knowledge about yourself be damaged by the ignorance of others about you'. Make yourself vulnerable to the divine inspirations during your lifetime in this world. For the spiritual moments have properties that are known by the gnostics alone. And when the harbingers of speculation uplift you to these sacred heights and to such elevated rites of intimacy, then tell your kinsfolk among your perceptive faculties: *Lo! Wait! I see a fire afar off. Peradventure I may bring you a brand therefrom or may find guidance at the fire* (20:10), *So take off thy shoes, for lo! thou art in the holy valley of Tuwa* (20:12).

Let not yourself be deluded by the ropes of the imagination of the people of disputation, because it is like *invented magic, And throw that which is in thy right hand! It will eat up that which they have made. Lo! that which they have made is but a wizard's artifice, and a wizard shall not be successful to whatever point (of skill) he may attain.* (20:69 and also 28:36)

Do not forget me in your spiritual moments and grant me a share in your pious prayers. And the benedictions and peace of God be upon the holy and blessed saints, especially upon our master, the master of all, and upon his entire Household and progeny. And praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.

The writing of this treatise was completed by the hand of its author, he who is utterly dependent on the mercy of his Lord, Muḥammad ibn Sa'd, known as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, after the last evening prayer on Thursday night, the twelfth of Jumādā al-Thānī in the year eight hundred and seventy-two after the migration of the Blessed Prophet.

Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī

Şadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Dashtakī, known also as Sayyid-i Sanad (The Master of Documents) is regarded by many as the founder of the School of Shiraz. We know very little about the life of Şadr al-Dīn except that his family migrated to Shiraz in the fifth/eleventh century and that he was born there in the quarter known as Dashtak in 828/1424. Şadr al-Dīn's life unfortunately ended tragically when he was implicated in political disturbances in the city. The Turkic ruler of the city accused him of involvement and sent a mob to his home where he was killed in 903/1497. He was buried in the Manşūriyyah *madrasah* where his mausoleum survives to this day.

Şadr al-Dīn first studied Arabic and religious sciences with his uncle Sayyid Ḥabīb Allāh Dashtakī and philosophy with Muslim Fārsī, an unknown philosopher in Shiraz. He may have studied logic and philosophy with Mawlā Qawām al-Dīn Muḥammad Kulbārī but no firm confirmation of this claim is possible. His mastery of both religious and intellectual sciences earned him such honorific titles as Şadr al-'Ulamā' (Foremost among Scholars) and Sayyid al-Mudaqqiqin (Master of Those who Possess Accuracy). The similarity of the first title with Şadr al-Muta'allihīn, a title bestowed exclusively upon Mullā Şadrā, along with the common name Şadr al-Dīn, has often been a source of confusion, resulting in the attribution of some of the writings of Dashtakī to Mullā Şadrā. Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī not only became a major philosopher and scholar of transmitted sciences (*'ulūm-i naqlī*), but also emerged as a powerful public figure. In 883/1478 he built the Manşūriyyah *madrasah* in Shiraz named after his son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manşūr, to whom we have dedicated the next chapter. Philosophy, logic and the natural sciences as well as religious sciences were all taught at the Manşūriyyah. Later the *madrasah* became one of the most significant centres of intellectual science where masters of the School of Shiraz fostered higher learning. The influence of this *madrasah* was extensive not only in Persia but also in India.

Şadr al-Dīn's son traces the intellectual genealogy (*silsilah*) of his family through

the great masters going back all the way to Ibn Sīnā himself. The chain as recounted by his son is as follows:

Ibn Sīnā → Bahmanyār → Abu'l-‘Abbās al-Lūkārī → Afḍal al-Dīn al-Ghilānī → Sayyid Şadr al-Dīn al-Sarakhsī → Farīd al-Dīn Dāmād al-Nayshābūrī → Naşīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī → Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī → Sayyid Muslim Fārsī (grandfather) → Sayyid Muslim Fārsī (father) → Sayyid Fāḍil Muslim Fārsī → Sayyid Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī.¹

The above lineage is important both for the understanding of the chain of transmission of philosophy up to Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī and also for those of later philosophers of Shiraz who were in turn the predecessors of the School of Isfahan.

As for his writings, it is only of late that the nearly twenty works of Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, including glosses, commentaries and original contributions, have begun to be studied and introduced to the public. Şadr al-Dīn, who writes mostly as a Peripatetic immersed at the same time in *ishrāqī* teachings, writes and comments on logic, philosophy and the natural sciences and even on agriculture, revealing his mastery in philosophy and *kalām* and some of the sciences. Perhaps his most important work is his commentary on the *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād* (Catharsis of Theology) of Naşīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī which includes several sets of glosses, criticisms by Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī, and Dashtakī’s response to those criticisms.

The debate between Dawānī and Dashtakī concerning the famous ‘liar’s paradox’, found originally in Greek sources, was well known to logicians. Among other salient issues to which Şadr al-Dīn turns in his philosophical work are different kinds of predication (*ḥaml*), the principality of existence or quiddity (*aşālat al-wujūd* or *māhiyyah*), unity and the gradation of being, the immateriality of the imaginative faculty and mental existence. These discussions became famous not just in Shiraz but also in India and, moreover, influenced the philosophers of the School of Isfahan. Mullā Şadrā in particular discussed the debates between Dashtakī and Dawānī, often taking the side of the former.

Şadr al-Dīn Dashtakī was both a notable figure in his own right and important because of the remarkable legacy of his sons, who were also his pupils. Ghiyāth al-Dīn, who will be discussed later, and ‘Imād al-Dīn Mas‘ūd and their descendants became proponents of their father’s philosophical views in Persia, Arabia and India. Some, like Mīr Nizām al-Dīn Dashtakī (d. 1015/1607), authored a number of notable works in *‘irfān* (gnosis). Another son, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ma‘şūm Dashtakī (d. 1032/1622) who lived in Mecca, taught Islamic jurisprudence according to the five schools of Islamic Law. Yet another, Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad, born in Ṭā’if, went to the Daccan in 1055/1645 at the request of the king of Daccan where he married

1. This chain is mentioned by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī in his *Kashf al-ḥaqā’iq al-muḥammadiyyah*, quoted by Q. Kākā’ī, ‘Shīrāz—mahd-i ‘irfān—zādgāh-i Mullā Şadrā’, in *Khīradnāmah-yi Şadrā*, 1, no. 2, ser. 2 (August, 1995), p. 65.

his daughter and became a political authority. He wrote poetry and left behind a collection of poems in Arabic.¹

In this chapter, we have included a section of Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī's, *Risālah fī shubhat jadhr al-aṣamm* (Treatise on the Problem of the Liar's Paradox) which Dashtakī treats in a dialectical fashion. He presents the views of other major philosophers on the subject, such as Taftāzānī, Kātibī and Samarqandī and responds to them.

The Liar's Paradox is a philosophic-logical paradox whose origin goes back to the Greek philosophers. It is summarized as follows:

On the one hand, if it is the case that 'This sentence is false' is true, then it is false, which means that it is actually true. This, however, means that it would be false, a process that continues *ad infinitum*. On the other hand, if it is the case that 'this sentence is false' is false, then it is true, which means that it is actually false. This however means that it is true, a process that also continues *ad infinitum*.

The significance of the problem is that the Liar's Paradox represents a grammatically correct sentence which does not lend itself to being treated within a logical framework. Moreover, it defies logical classification since it cannot be given a truth value within the traditional bivalent system of truth and falsity. If the paradox is true, it must be false, and if it is false then it is true.

Throughout history, solutions to this problem have also been offered by Western philosophers each of whom technically solve the Liar's Paradox but create other problems or proofs to which our existing systems of logic are not adequate to respond. There are those who have suggested that the Liar's Paradox and similar propositions are meaningless since they are based on the law of bivalence. This solution, too, proves to be detrimental to modern symbolic logic since it implies that every sentence must either be true, false or meaningless. This turns our bivalent system into a trivalent system.

M. Aminrazavi

1. For more information on the philosophical achievements of the rest of Dashtakī's family, see S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*, pp. 53, 203, 321 n. 22.

TREATISE ON THE PROBLEM OF THE LIAR'S PARADOX

*Risālah fī shubhat jadhr al-aṣamm*¹

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī, *Risālah fī shubhat jadhr al-aṣamm*, ed. A. F. Qarāmalikī, *Khīrad Nāmāh-yi Ṣadrā*, no. 5&6 (Tehran, 1375 Sh./1997), pp. 74–82.

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Confirmation of the Paradox of the Liar

Should you say: 'Were the truth of what has been confirmed to the effect that the truth or falsity of a judgment depends on its correspondence with the external object or the matter in itself, and its falsity [is measured to its] opposite,' it would follow necessarily that truth and falsity cannot pertain to the same report, but the fact is that they might. An instance of this is the statement of one who says: 'All my words at this moment are a lie', assuming that he does not utter at that moment any other words. For, that is a statement whose truth entails its falsity and vice versa.

I say this is a paradox which has confounded the best scholars of all lands and embarrassed the intelligent masters of all times. It is well known to the masses at large and has been investigated by a large number of eminent scholars and ordinary distinguished people. They have all dealt with it in a variety of elegant ways and responded to questions in subtle and profound ways.

We will start with their statements and then proceed to discuss them

1. Taftāzānī's response

One of these statements is what the learned Taftāzānī has affirmed to the effect that, 'Words I will utter tomorrow are not true', and then confined himself tomorrow to what he has said to the effect 'that what he uttered yesterday is true'. In that case the truth of tomorrow's and yesterday's words entails that they are untrue or vice versa.

(Taftāzānī) says: 'This is a fallacy which has puzzled the men of reason and superior intelligence; that is why I have called it the liar's paradox. I have explored a variety of discourses but found therein nothing which is satisfactory and I meditated thereon at length, but would discern only the smallest light. This consisted in the perception that truth and falsity could be either a property of the judgment; that is, the positive or negative relation, as is the case in all propositions, or as a judgment, or a statement of what is the case by implication, as in our statement: "This is

1. For the original version of this problem also known to the ancients as *The Pseudomenon*, see the works of Eubulides of Miletus and Theophrastus.

true and that is false.” The two propositions are not incompatible unless they are regarded as attributes of the same judgment, or two judgments on the same subject, contrary to the hypothesis that the one is regarded as an attribute of the judgment and the other an actual judgment. This is due to the fact that the referent is clearly different, as in the statement “The sky is beneath us”, which is true, false or obscure, as in the individual case which is the object of the fallacy. For, if we assume that it is false, only its contrary would be true; namely, this statement is true. In that case, truth would be a judgment of the individual case, not a state of its judgment, which would be falsity, as we supposed. For, truth is an attribute of the positive relationship of the two contradictories and a judgment of the individual case which is the original object. Therefore, they cannot be presumed to two versions of one judgment or the judgments of the same subject matter.

Similarly, if we assume that it is truthful, then the opponent may deny the contradiction proper to the concurrent truth and falsity on the ground that one refers to the judgment of the individual and the other to its subject matter. However, the right course for me in this matter is to forgo the response and admit our inability to deal with this puzzle.⁷

Now, insofar as the weakness of that answer is obvious to the people of perception, the respondent has actually admitted that he has overstepped the limits of truthfulness. We shall therefore refrain from further detail, lest we be accused of prolixity.

2. Kātibī's response

Another proposal is found in the commentary on *al-Kashf* (of Kātibī) to the effect that the statement of one who proclaims that ‘all my words at this moment are false’, assuming that he does not say anything else at that moment, should be regarded as a judgment, whose truth entails its falsity and vice versa; so that it is neither true nor false.

We answer that we do not grant that these words, assuming them to be false, would entail that some parts of it at this moment are true. The reason is that the truth of this proposition consists in the predication of falsehood of every part of his words uttered in that moment; and then its truth would consist in the conjunction of its truth and falsity and then its falsity would consist in the negation of this conjunction. However, the negation of this conjunction does not entail the truth of some of its parts at this moment, since it is possible that its negation may be due to the falsity of the whole discourse.

Critique of Kātibī's response

This calls for further discussion. For, if the negation of the conjunction of truth and falsity is due to the negation of each of the speaker's words uttered at this moment, then there is no doubt that judging of the falsity of everyone of them

would be true. Then, it would follow necessarily that this statement of the speaker, 'All my words at this moment are false', is true, and questioning its truthfulness is not allowed. For, were the questioner to explain the conjunction in the way the respondent has done, it would have to be denied. He would then have to explain the matter in another way such as the argument that it is the part of his words which is the subject matter of the judgment 'all my words at this moment are false' which is confined to that statement, then its falsity would necessarily consist in the fact that the predicate, which is false, is not affirmed of its subject (i.e. his statement 'my words') and then his words would not be false. Then, it must necessarily be truthful; otherwise, it would amount to determined speech free of conformity or its opposite, which is absurd.

3. Samarqandī's response

Another account is given in *Sharḥ al-qisṭās* (of Samarqandī) in two ways: The first is what he refuted to the effect that we choose that that statement of the speaker is false, whereupon it would follow that some of his words are true. This we do not grant, for what follows logically is that some of his words are not false, that some being the non-existing part. It would then follow that that part is not false, but not that it is true, due to the absence of the subject matter. (This is fine, but it rests on the proposition that the words he did not utter then at that moment could be said to be his words at that moment, whereas in fact it is not.)

The second way is what he has opted for to the effect that the object of discourse depends on the choice of the speaker. Hence, if the speaker means by his words 'all my words mean something other than these words', then truth and falsity cannot be conjoined.

If he means, on the other hand, those words (or something else), then that would be as though he uttered those words and then said that those words are false. For, if he meant that those words are part of that judgment, then the predicate, which is false, would be an object of discourse and that discourse would be an assertion, as well as a predicate of that discourse, which is the object of his statement. He would then have conjoined in this discourse two reports, each of which is dependent on the other. We would then choose as an alternative that that discourse is false.

As for his statement that part of his speech would then be true, we say, 'Yes, the second report is true. For were it false, then our statement that it is false would be true', and then no contradiction would arise; since in that case truth and falsity are not predicated of the same subject.

Critique of Samarqandī's response

This calls for discussion, first, because the object of discourse is determined by its title rather than the will of the speaker. Thus, what is part of the title in itself is said to be the object of the discourse, which does not depend on the will of the speaker.

For instance, if we say everything is such or such, then that judgment would apply to every member of that thing in itself and is not confined to what the speaker wished to include in that judgment. Secondly, what the respondent has mentioned to the effect that two assertions involved are obviously false, and even if that is granted, the substance of the problem is not resolved.

4. *The response of the authoritative Ṭūṣī*

There is also what Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī has reported on the authority of some scholars to the effect that truth and falsity pertain to every statement which the speaker has vacillated in spelling out until he is certain of conformity or its opposite. For if the two statements are conjoined, then conformity or its opposite is not conceived in the sense of positive predication but rather negative and then that statement may be said to be neither true nor false in such a way that the negation of the one will not entail the affirmation of the other, the error here being due to the misconception of predication.

The learned Ḥillī says: ‘The truth is that error arises by reason of substituting what is essential for what is accidental.’ (Here end his words.)

Critique of Ṭūṣī’s response

It raises a question, for the correspondence observed in the information together with the object of that information does not require necessarily that the object of information is other than the information itself. [This is] because it consists in verifying what the information denotes with respect to the union of the two terms or the like in themselves, regardless of whether the information is identical with the object of that information, as in the fallacy under discussion which is or is not part of the statement that every piece of information is compound or not.

5. *The response of the noble learned scholar (Murājñī)*

It is reported that the noble scholar Murājñī has said: ‘There is no doubt that the allusion to the thing cannot be part of the allusion itself; so that this will not be a part of its own members. This is how the problem is resolved.’

Critique of Murājñī’s response

This is open to discussion. For if he meant by his statement, ‘this, will not be part of its own members’, the information, is not part of the information itself, we would then grant it. However, the judgment does not apply to the members of that information, so that if the information is not a member thereof, it would not be part of the judgment. If, on the other hand, it is a member of its own subject matter, then it is necessarily excluded that the member of its subject matter be confined to it. It does not follow from this that the allusion should be reduced to that allusion itself, since it is not incumbent on the judge to refer in his report to the members

of the subject matter. For, he simply judges the title in a way which is applicable to all its members, without his being conscious of this applicability, as has been shown in the proper context.

6. *The response of Ibn Kammūnah*

There is also Ibn Kammūnah's response to Kātibī, when he wrote to him inquiring about this problem. He said: 'We do not grant that his words at this moment are either true or false. For exclusion is not possible here.' If it is said that this is a statement and a statement is either true or false and this is what distinguishes compound discourse from other forms of compound discourse we would answer: 'We do not grant that this is how that form of discourse differs from other forms of discourse. For, it is possible to determine that it is either true or false and such a determination does not contradict its being true or false. For it does not belong to the aforementioned judgment to be either true or false. Accordingly, the possibility of judging that it is true or false does not contradict the possibility that it is neither in itself.' This is what occurred to me and I ask our lord, may God Almighty guard him, to look into it.

Critique of Ibn Kammūnah's response

This calls for discussion. For what he mentions regarding the inapplicability of truth or falsity to this kind of discourse applies to all forms of discourse. For, it may be said that the possibility of judging it as either true or false does not contradict its being either in itself. For, if this entails that this statement is neither true nor false, then it would follow that no statement is true or false, since they are all alike. Similarly, if it is inferred from the inapplicability of truth or falsity to that statement from what the respondent has said, we would respond by invoking his own statements. For, one may argue that the clue is that both terms of this accredited and actual report are two reasonable matters which have been stated to be in conjunction. Now, if the conjunction between them with respect to the same subject is realized, then the judgment is true; otherwise it is false. For, conjunction must either exist or not, the two being self-contradictory, whereupon the above response becomes untenable.

7. *Dawānī's response*

There is also the argument of some of our contemporaries to the effect that if one were to say, 'My words today are lies', they would be true or false on the assumption that this is a statement of fact, but it is not the case. For, his words do not refer to an individual utterance, nor are they a means of observing its members, since the only member thereof is 'my words are false'. The speaker may not then regard his statement 'my words' as an allusion thereto and a means of observation. Nor can he say this, if he intended to refer to the utterance of the same words.

Critique of Dawānī's response

This calls for discussion too. First, because whether speech is informative [meaningful] does not depend on its reference to an individual object. For its subject matter may have no reference to an object at all, as in the statement, 'The nothing is such and such'. However, it could have a reference to an individual object or with no reference thereto, as in the case of propositions whose objects are individual physical entities. Secondly, because the meaning of making the title the means of observing its individual object consists in judging the title itself in a way which applies to its individual referent by means of conforming to it in principle, so that the object understood essentially is the title only, as shown in its context, rather than observing the special status of the individual upon observing the title.

Then, there will be two intelligibles essentially, and so the judge will not need to infer the specific status of the individual from the title itself, so that it might be said that he cannot do that. Thirdly, because we know necessarily that we can report that any term we wish is false, regardless of whether it is defined or not and whether its sense implies an individual or not. To exclude the words of the speaker in that judgment with respect to the other terms is purely arbitrary, and what has been mentioned in explaining it is not known. It has been said that he (Dawānī) has expressed the reply as he likes and then added to it what is not added to that substantially. The right answer is that the truth of a statement is a matter of reporting the outward relation, either in the appropriate manner, whereupon the statement would be true, or alternatively in an inappropriate manner, and then the statement would be false. Where reporting the outward relation is excluded, the statement cannot be verified. Thus, for the statement of one who says, 'My words today are a lie', assuming that this is an allusion to those words themselves, the mental relation which is its connotation will not be a report of an outward relation which he indicates outwardly, and thus it will not be a real report. Does he not see that a speaker who says, 'These words of mine are true', while referring to those same words, would not be uttering a report, but one which reasonable people might refer to as what he dislikes.

This is the definite account of the respondent (Dawānī), but how far is this from what he mentioned! For the crux of this account is the denial of the fact that interpreting that speech in that way amounts to a statement of fact, insofar as it consists of a report of the external relation, rather than the fact that there is no reference in his words to a single instance.

This calls for discussion. For, we do not grant that the truth of a statement consists in reporting an external relation. You have already learnt that there is no relation objectively between the two extreme terms of an affirmative, necessary and true proposition with respect to the thing itself, because of their union there. Had he (Dawānī) granted that the truth of a statement consists in reporting the external relation, it would then follow that there is no obscurity in saying that

that statement has two extremes terms, the first is 'my words' and the second is 'a lie'. Why then is it not allowed to report the relation between them? Now, if his statement 'my words today are a lie' is understood as an allusion to the essence of those words, then the conceptual relation, which is its connotation, will not be a report of an external relation.

I say if he wished, by regarding that an allusion to those words in themselves, to make 'my words' which is the title, a reference to it, the crux of the response would amount to the form which the responder himself has asserted, and then it would be countered by all that we have already stated. If, on the other hand, he wished to make all his statement 'my words are a lie' an allusion to those words, which are part of its subject matter, that would follow only if the whole proposition were an allusion to its individual subject matter. The falsity of that is too obvious to be missed. If, however, he meant something else, then it should be clearly explained so that its status may be understood. But since it is not necessary in making a statement that the one who makes it should refer to its individual object, then his statement, like his words 'these words of mine are true' would not conform to the canon of regularity.

8. *The chosen response*

This is what I have gathered with respect to solving this paradox, none of which is free of error. I will proceed depending on God's right guidance; for this always leads to the right path. You should know that truth or falsity always requires the fulfilment of a report so described. Thus if that report is fulfilled, it is possible then to describe it as one or the other; otherwise not. For instance, if Zayd utters a statement, it will be correct to say that his words are true or false; but if he does not make an utterance, then his words cannot be described as true or false. This is true where truth or falsity are considered only once. If, however, they are considered twice, asserting that Zayd's words are true, false or true, or his words are false, true or false, determining their veracity cannot be inferred from a single report, but rather two, one of which is reporting the fact and the second asserting that it is true or false. For instance, if Zayd asserts that the world is temporal, adding the judgment that this statement is true, it would be possible then to assert that Zayd's words are true, false or true. However, if he reports that, without judging it as true, it will not be possible to say that Zayd's words are true, false or true, because the statement, 'Zayd's words are true, false or true', is then lacking. So how could it be described as either true or false?

Similarly, if he does not make a statement and holds that, 'My words are true', his claim cannot be described as true or false, in the absence of his statement 'my words are true', due to the absence of the report which he has described as true. It appears that when he utters a single statement, it cannot be said that Zayd's words are true, false or true, because the object deserving of being described as true or false, which is repeated in the above-mentioned manner, is lacking.

This is what we are dealing with, insofar as only one statement has been affirmed, while the assertion of falsity has been considered twice. The fact that only one report has been affirmed then follows from the supposition that he did not utter in the aforementioned hour during which his words were uttered except one report, namely, 'All my words ...' That he has considered falsity twice follows from the fact that what is judged in the aforementioned report is his statement 'my words at this time' and the judgment refers to what its meaning in itself implies, that reference being confined to his saying 'my words are at this moment a lie' and, judging it to be false, has been applied to it in the statement 'my words are false'. It is as if he were saying: 'my words are false, false.'

I do not say that the judge observes the state of the subject who makes that kind of specific statement, but rather that he makes a judgment which applies to that statement. His truthfulness would depend on the validity of applying the predicate to that statement, while its falsehood would depend on its opposite. Thus, it is apparent that falsity is taken into account with respect to the specific statement twice, which calls for two statements so as to justify qualifying it as true or false. This is equivalent to saying: 'Zayd's words are false, true or false' while it is assumed that Zayd has uttered only one statement. These are matters to reflect upon!

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī was born in the Dashtak quarter of Shiraz in 866/1461. His father, recognizing the exceptional intelligence of his gifted son, became Ghiyāth al-Dīn's first teacher. Ṣadr al-Dīn's love for his son grew as he witnessed the young boy's genius not only in the religious sciences but also in language and logic, jurisprudence and Qur'ānic commentary, theology, philosophy, astronomy and mathematics, ethics, gnosis and even medicine and pharmacology. In recognition of his son's gift, Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī named the famous Manṣūriyyah *madrasah* in Shiraz, which he had built, after him.

After the Safavids conquered Persia, Ghiyāth al-Dīn was appointed 'Ṣadr' (a high religious office) in which he served for many years. In 938/1531–1532, however, due to his differences with courtiers and some of the policies of the Safavids, he withdrew completely from the court and retired to Shiraz where he died in 948/1542.

The political rivalry in the Safavid court between the philosophers on one side and the jurists on the other put the Dashtakī family in a difficult position. With the jurists gaining the upper hand, the intellectual atmosphere became difficult for the philosophers. Under such circumstances many figures belonging to the Shiraz School, including the Dashtakī family and their students, migrated to India, Mecca, and Medina and this migration may have eventually resulted in the end of the propagation of the central importance of the School of Shiraz.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn is considered by many as the most significant Islamic philosopher of the tenth/sixteenth century preceding Mīr Dāmād and the greatest *ishrāqī* philosopher between Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the School of Isfahan. He not only taught philosophy and theology in the Manṣūriyyah *madrasah*, but in 927/1521 he was summoned to Marāghah to repair the observatory constructed by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and to complete the *Ilkhānīd Zij* (astronomical tables).

Perhaps the philosophical acumen of Dashtakī cannot be said to equal that of some of his predecessors, men like Avicenna, or his successor Mullā Ṣadrā. Nevertheless, Dashtakī must be recognized as one of the most significant

philosophers of his day and the most important link between Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and his philosophical circle and the School of Isfahan. In his younger days, Dashtakī made a scathing attack against the opinions of Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī but developed a milder attitude later in his life as his own philosophical perspectives became more dominant. He even praised Dawānī in some of his later books. Dashtakī was also famous as a physician and his medical books *al-Shāfiyyah* (The Healer) and *Ma'ālīm al-shifā'* (Milestones of Healing) were taught to medical students for many centuries.

Like so many other figures before and after him, Dashtakī was also interested in reconciling various trends in the Islamic intellectual tradition. In this vein, he made an attempt to change some of the features of the School of Illumination and Peripatetic philosophy, while defending the central tenets of the *ishrāqī* School. He professed that many truths became known to him through intellectual intuition. In theology, Dashtakī advocated systematic theology, criticizing such theologians as Muḥammad Ghazzālī for what he labelled 'the inflexibility and shallowness' of their debates. In the domain of *'irfān* (gnosis) one can see the influence of Ibn 'Arabī upon Dashtakī's writings. His comments on the unity of being, the unity of Divine Acts and the spread of love in all beings reveal the extent of Ibn 'Arabī's influence on him.

The hostility of the political climate toward Ghiyāth al-Dīn and his followers in Shiraz may have contributed to the disappearance of many of his manuscripts. Among the works that are extant or attributed to him we can mention *al-Muḥākamāt* (Trials), in which he compares the glosses of his father and Dawānī upon *Sharḥ al-tajrīd* and criticizes Dawānī severely; his commentary upon the *Hayākil al-nūr* of Suhrawardī, which is much longer than that of Dawānī and again critical of the latter; *Shifā' al-qulūb* (Healing of Hearts), a work that seeks to shed light on the difficulties of Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing); *al-Ḥikmah al-Manṣūriyyah* (Manṣūrian Philosophy) written from an *ishrāqī* point of view and *al-Ishārāt wa'l-talwīḥāt* (Directives and Intimations), which may well be his most important work, in which he seeks to integrate the teachings of Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī; and *Maqāmāt al-'arīfīn* (Stations of the Gnostics), a highly gnostic work. In addition to these works, he wrote a number of treatises on diverse subjects such as *Akhlāq-i Manṣūri* (Manṣūrian Ethics) which is one of the major texts of philosophical ethics, even though the scope and depth of its treatment of various topics within ethics do not match some of the other classical works on this subject, such as *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* or *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*.

Of special interest among the works of Ghiyāth al-Dīn, especially from the point of view of the relationship between philosophy and revelation, is his commentary on chapter seventy-six of the Qur'ān, *Sūrah al-insān*, entitled *Tuḥfat al-fatā* to which we have already alluded. Because of the questions that had arisen among Qur'ānic scholars about the Meccan or Madinan nature of the verses of this chapter

and the realities to which many of its verses referred, numerous commentaries have been written upon it, from that of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āsimī in the fourth/tenth century to those of Mawlānā Ḥabīb Allāh Kāshānī and Muḥammad ‘Alī Hamadānī composed during the last two centuries. In addition, this chapter has of course been commented upon by the famous Qur’ānic commentators. Ghiyāth al-Dīn made use of the earlier commentaries, especially those of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, Zamakhsharī, Bayḍāwī and Nayshābūrī. But his own interpretation differs in many ways from those of his predecessors, as well as from those who wrote commentaries on *Sūrat al-insān* alone, in that Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s approach is essentially philosophical and gnostic. In fact this work is among the most important philosophical commentaries on the Qur’ān and is without doubt one of the most remarkable commentaries written by an Islamic philosopher before Mullā Ṣadrā’s monumental commentary on the Sacred Text.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr trained a number of outstanding students who continued his intellectual legacy after him. Not least among his notable students, his son, Amīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Thānī, wrote a treatise on juridical, theological, philosophical, and gnostic themes entitled *al-Ḍhikr* (Remembrance). He taught at the Maṣṣūriyyah *madrasah* until at least 961/1554, but due to hostile political conditions he left Shiraz for Gilan (near the Caspian Sea). Not much is known about his situation in Gilan but we know that he remained there for the rest of his life. Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s other famous students include Fakhr al-Dīn Sammākī and Jamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shirāzī,¹ one of whose students may have been the first teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā when he studied in Shiraz as a young man.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr’s intellectual edifice is indicative of the rapprochement that was taking place in the School of Shiraz between *mashshā’ī* and *ishrāqī* philosophy, *‘irfān* and *kalām*. It is for this very reason that his influence was far-reaching in Shiraz, Isfahan, and India. In studying the philosophy of Dashtakī it is easy to see how indebted Mullā Ṣadrā was to him and why he reveres him in his works, especially the *Aṣfār*. It was this rapprochement that gave birth to the golden period of Islamic philosophy known as the School of Isfahan in the eleventh/seventeenth century.

In what follows we have included two examples of Dashtakī’s works: first, parts of *Akhlāq-i Maṣṣūrī* (Maṣṣūrian Ethics), and second *Maqāmāt al-‘arīfīn* (Stations of the Gnostics).

Akhlāq-i Maṣṣūrī is one of the few notable books on theoretical ethics in the Islamic philosophical tradition. The author begins by telling us that, ‘The book contains the exposition of views and the use of language in order to explain the

1. On the students of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr see Q. Kākā’ī, ‘Shāgirdān-i Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī Shirāzī’, in *Khīradnāmah-yi Ṣadrā*, vol. 11 (Spring 1998), pp. 23ff.; also Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī, *Tuḥfat al-fatā’ fī tafsīr sūrat ḥal atā*, ed. Parwīn Bahārzādah (Tehran, 1381 Sh./2002), pp. 62–67.

principles of the science of ethics.' He then offers an in-depth analysis of the sources of virtues and vices and whether they are ingrained in our nature or acquired, and furthermore what it takes for vices to be cured. The modern debate of nature versus nurture is discussed by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr as well as the role of religious injunctions in the cure of character traits.

The author categorizes virtues into different types such as quick-wittedness (*zakā'*), quickness of understanding (*sur'at-i fahm*), the clarity of mind (*ṣafā-yi dhīhn*), ease of learning (*suhūlat-i ta'allum*), and excellence of intellection (*ḥusn-i ta'aqqul*), and explains each of them in some length.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr concludes the treatise by identifying the greatest virtue as spiritual love and the role of love in bringing about perfection. In Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr's treatment of ethics, one can see a spiritual rendition of Aristotle's theory of 'virtue ethics' and how building a good character leads to performing good acts.

In the second part we have included some of Ghiyāth al-Dīn's *Maqāmāt al-'arīfīn* which is a synopsis of his gnostic teachings and that of the School of Shiraz. This work, can be regarded as a commentary upon the ninth chapter of *Fī maqāmāt al-'arīfīn* (On the Stations of the Gnostics) of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbīhāt* with added material perhaps inspired by Khwājah 'Abd Allāh Anṣārī's *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* (Resting Places of the Travellers), as well as certain *kalāmī* discussions. The treatise, written in the latter part of his life, carries a Shi'i orientation and incorporates the discussions on Peripatetic philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, the *kalām* of Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, the criticism of later theologians such as Ījī, Jurjānī and Taftāzānī, and references to Suhrawardī's *ishrāqī* thought. Ghiyāth al-Dīn also offers gnostic interpretations of the verses of the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, and Arabic and Persian poems from classical poets such as Ḥallāj, Rūmī, and Ḥāfīz on the meaning of the sacred saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*) called *qurb al-nawāfil*, the transcendent unity of Being and the 'flow of existence'.

M. Aminrazavi

MANȘÛRIAN ETHICS

Akhlāq-i Manșūrī

Translated for this volume by Farhang Jahanpour from Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manșūr Dashtakī, '*Akhlāq-i Manșūrī: Risālah-yi ūlā az wajh-i thālith-i jāmi-jahān-namā*', *Ma'ārif*, 2 (1375/1955), 13, pp. 132–153.

1. Introduction and Explanation

This book contains the exposition of views and the use of language in order to explain the principles of the science of ethics.

The darkness of attachment to material and physical phenomena will prevent the eye of the heart from observing the beauty of rational secrets and witnessing scientific and practical truths and subtleties, which guarantee eternal happiness and felicity, and will preoccupy one with disjointed preoccupations and affairs of the present life. Without doubt, preoccupation with these concerns and the expenditure of one's strengths on such issues will result in the denial of the soul that has emanated from sublime worlds and has descended into the lower realms. The attachment to animal pleasures and material life will result in one's soul being attracted towards the body.

The more one is attached to something and in love with it, the more will be one's sorrow and pain when one is forced to cut oneself away from what he is tied to. Whatever one pins one's desire upon, it is most likely that he would achieve it in the best possible way and in the most perfect form, even if others would blame him for pursuing what seems to them to be ugliness and meanness. Whatever one gains, which is contrary to what one has desired, even though it may be full of beauty and value, nevertheless, in his eyes it will not look pleasing and in his mind it would appear repugnant.

The tall cypress is beautiful in its stature,
Yet the nightingale only desires the beauty of the rose.
What can I do if no other face pleases me?
As these shameless eyes are only fixed on your beauty.

Note

Avoiding lasting torment and gaining moderate pleasures is not achievable without bodily equilibrium, which requires easy companionship and partnership. Therefore, in view of these two preliminary statements, great prophets and philosophers who possess insight and knowledge have wisely and correctly set out the rules of ethics. They have discouraged every trait that might result in drawing the soul

towards the body or that distracts one from companionship [with God], and they have praised the traits that would produce the opposite results.

The rays of the subtleties and secrets that are manifest in the pearls of words and letters of this statement and in the lofty truths and precious lessons that are inherent in the laws of the *shari'ah* are not hidden from the eyes of wise and insightful people. They can deduct from the miraculous and novel order of the laws of God the principles of all morality in the most complete and most wonderful manner. God says: 'Surely God bids you to justice and good-doing and giving to kinsmen; and He forbids indecency, dishonour, and insolence, admonishing you, so that haply you will remember.' (16:90)

Reminder

Let it not remain hidden that some of the scholars have quoted the words of the philosophers and have put forward weak objections and have made irrelevant protests regarding their work. However, after quoting their words and making references to them, in order to dispel the doubts and to remove the obscure points we will provide correct answers to false assumptions and imaginings.

The first objection that is made and written about is that, 'The benefits of such arguments will be realized only if moral principles can be subject to change and transformation.' This assumption is not correct. On the contrary, the opposite will come to mind and to imagination. From the text of the blessed truth, 'And he [the Prophet] will not talk on the basis of fantasy', we move forward to the words of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, when he said: 'If you hear that a mountain has moved from its place, accept it; but if you hear that a man has changed his nature do not believe it, because he will ultimately return to that which forms a part of his traits.'¹ From the above statement, it is abundantly clear that the elimination of the original traits is not possible. According to the rules of philosophy, traits are dependent upon character, and character cannot be changed.

If someone denies the impossibility of the change of character, in view of the differences in the character of an individual at different ages and in different circumstances, we will say: Every individual has a moderate range of characteristics between a certain level and its extremes. Under all circumstances, the character would of necessity be confined within those ranges, and any change in those ranges would require the change of the character, and the continued existence of character would be impossible without those traits. Therefore, any attempt to eliminate one's character would be futile.

Removing the doubts and expelling the darkness

The source of the doubt that was referred to above lies in the lack of distinction

1. Suyûṭī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣāghir*, vol. 1, p. 107.

between what is possible and what is an inherent necessity. It also is due to the lack of awareness regarding the quality and the nature of the soul and what is common among individuals in the essence and reality of the soul as an instinctive source in all the traits and conditions, whether whole or in part. It is also due to the lack of understanding that the secondary aspects of character are possible factors, not inherent necessities. All these introductions have been set out in the principles of philosophy. However, those who raise such doubts have not been fully aware and informed of them, because when one properly understands these introductions there will be no room for those doubts and suspicions.

The explanation of this point is that all human beings share a common identity and the same source of instinctive qualities, which are the basis of human intelligence. Everybody is empty of traits and qualities, and no one is in possession of such [inherent] qualities, as has been pointed out in the principles of philosophy on the basis of proofs. If a trait or quality comes into being, it is due to the requirements and the capabilities of different individuals and characters, and it is not part of inherent necessities. It is like the nature of water, which is liquid if there is no obstacle to it, and when the obstacle is removed it shall return to that state again. It is not like the fact that the figure four is even, a factor that cannot be removed under any circumstances. Those who have entertained a doubt on this issue, their doubt has been due to their ignorance of this fact, or they have exaggerated the extent of their doubt in their writings and expositions.

It is clear that as the result of a deeper investigation and paying attention to the factors that remove the doubts, the falsity of those suspicions becomes clear and manifest. The examples and arguments that they have put forward have been based on exaggerations and extreme statements. The meaning of the text of the tradition is contrary to its apparent meaning. From the phrase, 'It will return to what has been created as a part of its nature', one understands that it is not an inherent necessity, but that it can be removed. However, it can be regained after the obstacle has been removed, such as the coldness of water that can be removed by certain means. After those obstacles have been removed it will return to its own natural state. Therefore, if one continues to guard against the obstacles, they will be removed and the desired end will be achieved.

Another mistake that the learned scholar has made regarding the remarks of Galen has been due to an imaginary doubt, while there is no weakness and no doubt in Galen's words. This has been due to the lack of proper understanding of his point, because he has not argued in favour of a vicious circle and has not made that argument in connection with contingent beings.

All ancient and recent philosophers and scholars have stressed the rejection of the circular argument, and what has been understood from the remarks of a few

philosophers has been contrary to the truth. Therefore, the master of philosophers¹ in his epistle on proofs has pointed out: 'Quoting the acceptance of such circular arguments in the writings of the philosophers is false. They have never supported such arguments, and those who have attributed such remarks to them have not understood their words properly.'

Also all other objections that this learned scholar has made regarding the words of the master of the philosophers [Ibn Sīnā] in *Shifā'* are all groundless. Both the philosophers who believe that the world is ancient, and the theologians and followers of religions who believe that the world has been created believe that creation has a definite starting-point in time.

All the objections that he has raised regarding the words of the later philosophers are also invalid and have to be rejected. From what has been written and elucidated, the falsity and rejection of all those arguments become clear. The first objection concerns the lack of distinction and differentiation, because the claim in brief is that all moral traits are subject to change, not that all people are liable to change in their moral traits. In any case, after elucidating the possibility of the change of moral traits it will be easy to clarify this position, provided that one does not interpret change as absolute extinction.

This would provide another clear case for rejecting that objection. The rejection of the mistakes that he has made and doubts that he has raised is clear to all enlightened people. It is clear that those objections are based on the rejection of all the clear experimental realities, and none of them is correct and worthy of a response. It is strange that despite his exaggerated claims and haughty views he has not distinguished between experience and deduction, and has rejected experimental realities by rejecting absolute deduction. It is clear that it is possible to doubt and suspect all the details without rejecting the entirety of the argument, because no one has experienced the heat of all fires [combined].

Reminder and clarification

In the principles of philosophy it has been made clear and explicit that man's spiritual powers are limited to rational, emotional and carnal faculties. The perfection of either of those faculties resides in moderation and balance. The perfection of the rational faculty would be philosophy and wisdom. Moderation in emotional faculty would result in chastity, and moderation in carnal desires would be courage. The common perfection of all these traits is moderation. Each of these four traits requires and includes various principles and subsidiaries, and in parallel with each virtue there will be three types of vices, namely going to excess in one direction or in the opposition direction, or total rejection of that principle. Briefly, the main function of morals is to safeguard the virtues and to remove the vices.

1. Šadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Dashtakī, the father of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī was the author of *Akhḷāq-i Maṣṣūrī*.

It is clear that as the result of perseverance and practice each trait will be made firm and constant, and its opposite will be weakened and will eventually disappear. In all cases, being aware of the benefits and harms of each action and behaviour would assist in the achievement of the virtue and the rejection of the vice.

Note and reminder

In the eyes of an ignorant and defective person, vices would be confused with virtues. For instance, he would confuse sophistry with philosophy and impetuosity with bravery and torpor with chastity. The source of mistake and confusion rests in the fact that there are certain common traits among evil people and virtuous people. For instance, those engaged in sophistry and fallacy engage in the language of argumentation and disputation, the same as the philosophers do, and deceitful and false people would repeat the words and actions [of philosophers] like monkeys and parrots. Ignorant and simple people who are incapable of understanding subtle truths and meanings fail to appreciate an action that would lead to perfection, and a knowledge that results in moral development. The height of their achievement and the apex of their glory is to put forward certain fake ideas that they have borrowed from others, and distort the truths that have come down to them from those before them. In this way, they try to mislead some blind and ignorant people.

Poem

A vile man may steal the words of the mystics,
To mislead some simple people through deceit.¹

While boasting of perfection and glory, and suffering from excessive arrogance, and going to excess in claims of wisdom and mysticism, they regard their satanic fancy as the ultimate perfection and the supreme form of discourse. They would portray the poison of doubt and suspicion as the sweet honey of research. The source of such conduct rests in the fact that their preoccupation with meanness and failure has prevented them from acquiring knowledge, and they have confused their ignorance with knowledge and have mixed truth with falsehood.

Note

Some learned scholars of the age have put forward a summary of what has been written in *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*. They have said: ‘There are a number of learned people who have safeguarded the principles of sciences and have written down the arguments and proofs that they have borrowed from others. However, some people who lack true intelligence and are deprived of the light of scholarship are amazed at the beauty of their arguments and the extent of their knowledge, while those people are

1. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, Book 1.

not certain and confident about any issue. Their attempt to pass themselves on as scholars and savants is like the efforts of some animals that imitate the words and deeds of human beings, such as monkeys or parrots, or like children who imitate the deeds of their elders.

‘There are some who do not clearly confirm any idea, and in debate and discussion they try to lay claim to a knowledge and greatness that they lack, and with false learning they confuse those who are novices in learning. At the same time, they will not be able to get involved in sciences whose truths are certain and in which fantasy has no place. However, they make lofty claims regarding sublime issues, and they dress falsehood in the garb of truth, and portray supposition and fantasy as knowledge and certitude, and they call all that research. As philosophy is the highest form of learning, and as only philosophers are capable of mastering the subtleties of philosophy, most people are incapable of distinguishing between this group of people and the philosophers.’¹

This is the full text of the remarks of that learned man. Eminent scholars know that at the present time anyone who manifests those states that the author has referred to above would be regarded as the rare scholar and eminent philosopher of the age, and would distinguish himself as a man of high position and lofty status. Some of those who pretend to be learned are even lower than the above-mentioned individuals, and they are not even capable of memorizing facts or learning the arguments through imitation. On the contrary, they only utter words that they have not learned through effort or study. Such conditions are limited to some of the [so-called] erudite scholars.

Such scholars believe that it is wrong to benefit others with their learning. The extent of the author’s learning is not surprising. What is surprising is what he has described as a shortcoming here and has rejected it in the preface to the Commentary on *Hayākil* and other books that he has written. He has made claims about his mastery of extensive sciences, without having spent time on them, and has made strange claims about some sublime sciences. In truth, he seems to exemplify the following poem:

They have kept me like a parrot in front of a mirror,
I only repeat what the master teaches me.²

What he has said here is a repetition of the words of the philosophers that have been recorded in *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* and elsewhere.

Warning

In the same way that in abstract sciences sophistry could be confused for philosophy,

1. Dawānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, pp. 77–79.

2. Ḥāfiẓ.

in practical traits and in the path of self-purification the masters of deceit and hypocrisy could be confused with sincere and pious individuals. In these days, sometimes the masters of deceit and hypocrisy could be regarded higher than the Sufis.

Poem

O Alas at the foolishness of these donkeys without tails and ears,
 Who have all appeared as masters and the lords of masters.
 For a few days they follow an ignorant person,
 Who is, devoid of religion, intellect, insight and intelligence.
 They exhibit no light of guidance outwardly,
 Nor is there a flame of love inside them.
 When they start to talk, the listeners wish
 That they would stop all that hallucination.¹

At the moment, there are no true Sufis to be seen. A group of people who pretend to be Sufis and who make others believe that they are Sufis lack any signs of purity and enlightenment, and their behaviour is dominated by the signs of passions. They turn towards carnal desires and pleasures, while a just person would not engage in tyranny. A pious man would not turn to the satisfaction of carnal desires, in the same way that a just person would not turn to tyranny.

A discourse on the nature of the descent of the soul and its attachment to the body
 Shaykh al-Ra'īs [Abū 'Alī Sīnā] in the book that we have referred to at the beginning of this epistle [*Shifā'*] says:

God has sent the soul with wisdom,
 Hidden, even from the understanding of the wise.
 Its descent was necessary to inform
 those who do not hear, to see it and hear it.
 The soul becomes aware of all the truth
 in all the world, and its tear cannot be repaired.
 If it does not strive to improve itself after its fall,
 then the soul would dwell in the realm of arrogance and would block
 its own path from achieving its desire:
 Time has blocked its path,
 Until it has disappeared with no hope of return.
 In other words, time has blocked the path of the soul until it has set without
 any hope of another rising.
 It is like a lightning that has lit up the skies,
 Then it disappears as though it has never been.

1. 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Diwān-i ghazaliyyāt*.

Rejoice with the answer that I have discovered.
The light of knowledge keeps shining.¹

In his explanation of the secrets of that verse the Shaykh has said that there is nothing in the world but that its reality is greater than what appears in it. The reason why people are separated from their perfect state and their attachment to their bodies is so they can achieve perfection [by uniting with their Source], and I have elaborated on this point in some of my other writings.

Note

As can be understood from the teachings of the greatest scholars, especially the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle in his *Ethics*, the reason for the attachment of the soul to the body is to achieve perfection. What the present unworthy writer understands is that each soul has the potential for a certain degree of perfection, and cannot go beyond that limit. It achieves whatever perfection it is capable of as the result of its attachment to the body. This does not mean that everyone would achieve the highest degree of perfection that is possible for man. However, by making use of certain means the soul achieves the highest degree of perfection that it is capable of achieving. Learned and intelligent people realize that achieving that level of perfection is not contrary to possessing a certain degree of vice either. This is part of what can be understood from their answers.

A reminder

The majority of infidels and ignorant people, who outwardly deny the existence of the Ultimate Source, inwardly admit and testify to searching for the Truth and trying to prove His existence. Consequently, no rational person can deny the existence of an Ultimate Source. The explanation of this assertion is that both on the basis of faith and reason, and sustained by both proof and tradition, the exalted and sanctified Lord is higher and greater than anyone's ability to fully understand the essence of His being. However, as the result of certain links that exist between the Master and the slave, and due to His unbounded Mercy and Grace that constantly flow through the channels of knowledge and wisdom, the inner reality of all created things testifies to and accepts the existence of the Creator.

This is why when unpleasant events take place and worry and anxiety envelop the soul, it automatically turns to the Creator for help and succour. This is a natural occurrence that takes place without any compulsion or hesitation. This is why that state by itself is conducive to one's prayers being answered, and the holy text testifies: 'Who is He who comes to the rescue of the needy when he calls unto Him?' (27:62) The natural reaction among the animals when they face a threat and when

1. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qaṣīdah al-a'yniyyah fi'l-naṣf*.

fleeing from danger and when overcome by fear and trepidation is also another indication of the same truth.

Therefore, different groups and conflicting nations in all ages, regardless of whatever religion they follow, have never condoned the denial of the Ultimate Source by any rational being. On the contrary, they have described the denial of the Ultimate Source contrary to sanity and rationality. This is why the first injunction by the prophets and God's messengers, God's peace and blessings be upon all of them, and the first prerequisite of their mission has been the belief in an Ultimate Source. This is also the correct interpretation of the following tradition: 'I was a hidden treasure; I desired to be known. Therefore, I created human beings in order to be known.'¹ That tradition provides another interpretation for that question, because the very basis of creation is awareness of and attraction towards the Beloved, and the strong desire for the love of God is the best proof of this argument.

Quatrain

The lamentation of the mystic is due to the pain of your separation,
The shouting of the wine seller is also the sign of the same sorrow.
The roaring of the drunkard is due to separation from thee
The bleeding hearts of the lovers testify to their longings for thee.

Love permeates everything and rules over everything. He is the beginning and He is the end. Thus comes to the end the first book. God knows what is the best and to Him everyone returns.²

2. Book Two on Ethics in Three Chapters

The First Chapter: The Principles of Ethics

Men of learning are aware that scholars have studied and defined the principles of ethics, and have distinguished between virtues and vices, and have elucidated the boundaries between them.

Some contemporary scholars have quoted those views and have made unwarranted criticisms and weak objections to them, although people of learning and insight reject those criticisms. Nevertheless, they might become the source of imitation by some who do not have deep roots in knowledge. Therefore, after quoting their main arguments and repeating their objections, we will refute them so that their falsity may become clear and manifest.

The work of the leading figures in natural philosophy has shown that man's

1. Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 87 (Tehran, 1362–1363 /1983–1984), p. 344.

2. A section of approximately fourteen pages have been omitted here.

rational faculty has two powers: one is the power of understanding and the other is the practical power; and each of these powers has two subdivisions. As for the power of understanding, one of its aspects is abstract reason, which is affected by sublime principles and capable of achieving scientific knowledge. The second power is that of practical reason which is the source of physical activities and deals with minor issues, such as thinking and seeing. Due to its attachment to the power of anger and passion, the second power will give rise to a few traits that could produce positive or negative results, such as bashfulness, laughter or weeping. By making use of imagination and fancy, this power can result in the understanding of minor concepts or minor scientific knowledge. At the same time, due to its affinity with abstract rationality and marrying the two together, it can deduct comprehensive views, which would result in more exalted action, such as comprehending the virtue of truthfulness and the vice of lying, and such like.

Practical reason also has two branches: one is the positive and repulsive power, which rejects unfavourable things from a dominant point of view. The other is the power of passion and attraction, which results in attracting favourable emotions. The first power demands dominance over all the activities of the body, so that it does not withdraw from those activities, but brings all other activities under its control and domination. All parts of the body act on the basis of what that dominant power defines. As the result of their submission to this power and subordination to this champion the affairs of the realm of human body get organized. It is not appropriate for any physical power to act without the orders of this dominant power, because otherwise it would result in disruption in one's condition.

If each of the powers perform its special task, which has been dictated by reason, as the result of the practice of abstract reason, which is the first branch of the power of understanding, philosophy will come into being. As the result of the proper performance of practical reason, which is the second branch of the power of understanding, justice will emerge. As the result of the proper performance of the power of dominance, courage will emerge; and as the result of the proper performance of the power of passion chastity will emerge. If all this takes place as it has been explained it would result in balance and justice in the practical power.

They have also said it in a different way, namely that the human soul possesses three separate powers which produce different effects on the basis of volition. If one of those powers overcomes another power it will be destroyed or will be subjugated. One of those powers is the rational power, which has also been called the dominant or the confident power. This power is the source of thinking and understanding and delves into the reality of things. The second power is the aggressive or the animal power, and it has also been called the power of temptation. This power is the source of anger and courage and is inclined towards wealth, domination and high position. The third power is the carnal power that has also been called the bestial power, which is the source of passion, desire for food, and the enjoyment of

eating, drinking and all that is forbidden. Therefore, the number of the qualities of the soul is equal to those powers.

Whenever the rational power is in a state of equilibrium, one will turn towards the acquisition of learning based on proofs. The mind will become subject to the angelic soul, and it will be satisfied with what is approved by rationality. As the result of this power, the soul will turn towards learning and consequently towards wisdom. Whenever the animal power is in a state of equilibrium, and whenever it subjugates itself to the angelic soul, the soul will turn towards self-control, and consequently towards courage.

Whenever the carnal power is in a state of equilibrium and whenever it subjugates itself to the rational soul it will remain content to what is its lot on the basis of the power of reason. From it will emerge chastity and consequently generosity.

When these three virtues are achieved and when they are combined and live in a state of harmony with each other, they will result in a state of being that contains all virtues and states of perfection, which can be described as a state of equilibrium.

The objections that are raised and wrong conclusions that have been drawn regarding the above classifications, although they are futile and faulty, nevertheless, they are as follows. According to the first argument, equilibrium is the ultimate state of practical power. According to the second argument, equilibrium is not limited to it, unless we say that the possession of any of those powers in the abstract realm would also involve the practical power.

According to the second argument, the three qualities are either component parts of a state of equilibrium, or are imagined to be component parts of a state of equilibrium; such as the qualities that form the basis of various traits. Here we would have two possibilities and the scholars favour this argument.

According to the first argument, the three qualities are dependent upon a state of equilibrium. Therefore, the perfection of the practical power would be achieved when all other powers are under its command, so that each of them acts in a state of equilibrium. This would be the meaning of balance. It is clear that the ability to control all the powers and to make them act in accordance with what is appropriate for them cannot be achieved unless each of them acts in a state of perfection. The explanation of the case is that whenever the three qualities are achieved and whenever the practical reason has dominance over physical power, to the extent that all other powers would be obedient to it and act according to its behest, the practical reason would not be affected [undermined] by them.

Therefore, if this is called the power of equilibrium, as the Ḥujjat al-Islam [Muḥammad Ghazzālī] in the *Iḥyāʾ [Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn]* has stated, it will be an abstract concept, which is in need of the three qualities and the perfection of the practical reason. He writes: 'Equilibrium is a state of the soul, and it is a power that governs anger and passion and regulates them in keeping with wisdom, and also regulates their expansion and contraction.'

From one point of view, this quality would be the absolute ruler, and other qualities would be its servants that do its bidding. Although reason is an abstract phenomenon, in the most perfect state, quality and quantity would be dependent upon this power. From another point of view, the abstract power is the supreme leader, and all other powers are at its service; and the ultimate state of the perfection of all powers would depend upon it and all things achieve their perfection in it.

If the state of equilibrium were achieved by all the three qualities, there would be no need to regard them as separate numbers and different entities. In the famous saying, there we would achieve 'unity in diversity'. Defining special vices as distinct categories would also not be appropriate, because on this basis all the separate parts would be identical with their totality. Therefore, the three qualities would not result in diversity, but would form a unified whole.

This is why Shaykh al-Ra'is [Abū 'Alī Sīnā] in the epistle on ethics, after regarding equilibrium as belonging to the totality of powers, has not dealt with different categories as separate entities, but has dealt with the three qualities and their relationship with one another. What others have included under the category of equilibrium, he has brought under the heading of philosophy.¹ From this it becomes clear that what has been written in various books dealing with this science on whether equilibrium consists of the three virtues or whether it depends on the rejection of different forms of vices is something that is worthy of consideration. God knows best about the truth of things.

Some people have objected to the fact that philosophy has been divided into two parts: the theoretical and the practical. They have also divided practical philosophy into three parts, one of which is ethics, which includes the four virtues, one of which is philosophy. Therefore, philosophy becomes one branch of itself. This objection can simply be disproved, because the philosophy that is capable of division is the philosophy that deals with the knowledge of existing things. As this knowledge is also one of the existing things, therefore, in that science one can also talk of its different aspects, and there is nothing wrong with that. This is because what falls under the category of philosophy deals with the issues that belong to philosophy. As the knowledge of philosophy is a praiseworthy achievement, therefore, it should be acquired through learning, and so forth.

Therefore, this means that the science of philosophy can be regarded as a science that incorporates all that falls under it, and there is nothing objectionable in this. A similar case may be made in the case of science itself, because it can be discussed as one of the existing things. Therefore, as science itself is one of the existing things, it is possible for it to also become one thing among all other existing things. This does not mean that science has become a branch of itself,

1. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Akhlāq*, pp. 369–377.

because science means that which can be affirmed or issues that are capable of affirmation. Therefore, it too can be regarded as an object of affirmation. The affirmations or the issues based on affirmations may become the objects of science, as they are part of what can be imagined, not because they are the entirety of science.

At times, it is permissible for the issues connected with philosophy or affirmations belonging to it to be regarded as practical philosophy. This is a response to that question in such a way that deals with that objection.

There is also another response to that objection, namely that when one talks of philosophy at this level, by that one means the use of practical reason, and this could be called practical philosophy. Due to the differences in meaning, some people might have been confused and have failed to understand it.

From this answer it follows that equilibrium does not contain all the virtues, and some have objected to this notion. The truth is that in the realm of practical science, compromise forms the basis of the argument, and those who are following this science are not duty-bound to abide by philosophical arguments. On the contrary, whatever seems to be more suitable in practice and saves the seeker from falling prey to vices will be regarded as sufficient. At the beginning of the search, novices are taught to look for practical results, and these will be achieved by improving and strengthening what already exists in nature.

References to the rebutting of criticisms and removing the objections and correcting the mistakes

People of insight and knowledge know very well that both the first and the second categories could either be simple or compound. In the case of the first category, it cannot be simple, but rather on the basis of what can be understood from that which has been explained, it is more likely to be compound. It has been said that if 'the concept of equilibrium is applied to the three traits, then it would also be regarded as compound, as the need to apply it to different numbers and categories would make it compound'. However, this is debatable, because it is possible for something that is composed of different parts to be regarded as a unitary phenomenon. Applying the concept of unity to that which is divisible to different parts is not wrong, except in some cases when unity cannot be established.

Briefly, it is said: 'From their words on this issue it could be deduced that the object is simple and not compound, while in other cases they have stressed that it is compound.' Nevertheless, both cases are possible. In fact, unity is the essence of what can be understood from the above remarks. Unity could incorporate simplicity. In other parts they have said: 'Equilibrium cannot be achieved except through chastity, courage and wisdom.' This sentence clearly refers to the compound nature of equilibrium only superficially.

Therefore, if this is what they have meant to reject, then the falsity of their

argument is clear to all those who are knowledgeable. However, if they mean something else, then their argument is not applicable. Verily God guides everyone to the path of salvation.

Again, it is clear to all the learned people that sagacity [*dhakā*] is one of the branches and principles of philosophy as applied to ethics. The term philosophy can also be used with different meanings, while the root of the confusion lies in the similarity of the terms that are used. If on the basis of the words of philosophers, sagacity is regarded as one of the branches of philosophy, then one can use it in different ways in such a way that philosophy could be divided into abstract and practical philosophy. That is if they wish to use the term philosophy as an abstract notion, and not as the knowledge of a known object. From these remarks, it could be understood that the source of confusion is the lack of knowledge and shortage of intelligence and insight.

Explanation and clarification

The names of different codified sciences could have various meanings and interpretations. The first meaning refers to the principles and the essence of the issues that can be established by looking for the truth. The second meaning refers to the knowledge of all that is known. The third is the qualities attributed to those sciences and to all that is known. Each of those meanings could be divided into abstract and practical. It is clear to all the learned people that sagacity can be described in such a way that it would fall under the third category that has been mentioned above.

Note

Philosophers and scholars first teach their students true sciences and concepts that are in keeping with their understanding. They will refrain from false and deviated issues. They will not mislead and confuse their students and pupils. Therefore, after considering the above, scholars would clearly see the falsity of the objection that has been raised.

Note

The four virtues can be divided into numerous branches, and each of those branches could have further subdivisions. Some of what has been recorded on this issue in books and is well known to the scholars will be set out here. You should know that philosophy has seven subdivisions. They are quickwittedness [*dhakā*], speed of understanding [*sur'at-i fahm*], the clarity of mind [*ṣafā-yi dhihn*], ease of learning [*suhūlat-i ta'allum*], excellence of intellection [*ḥusn-i ta'qqul*], retention [*taḥaffuz*] and mindfulness [*tadhakkur*].

Quick wittedness consists of the intensity and speed of understanding of the meanings that are hidden at the heart of all sciences. Clarity of mind consists of the ability to deduct the effects from causes. The difference between quick

wittedness and clarity of mind becomes clear after one elucidates their meanings in the way that has been described and explained. What philosophers have said in the description of the clarity of mind and quick wittedness is close to the above definition. The thinking of some of the contemporary scholars who have raised objections about the differences between those terms is due to their own lack of clarity of mind and quick wittedness.

The clarity of mind refers to the ability to deduct what is desired without any anxiety and confusion. Those who confuse the clarity of mind with talent lack the clarity of mind. Ease of learning consists of the ability to fix one's mind on what is desired, so that without any anxiety of mind or mental obstacles or various other impediments one can easily understand and learn what is desired. Excellence of intellection consists of the ability to think about every issue without any excess or defect, in which any negligence or weakness would not interfere and would not complicate the desired object with unnecessary additions. Retention consists of the ability to retain various scientific concepts. Mindfulness consists of the ability to be able to return to the concepts that have been retained in the brain.

Courage has eleven subdivisions: magnanimity [*kibār-i nafs*], self-control [*najdat*], intense effort [*'uluww-i himmat*], steadfastness [*thubāt*], patience [*hilm*], composure [*sukūn*], bravery [*shahāmat*], endurance [*taḥammul*], modesty [*tawāḍu'*], abstinence [*ḥamiyyat*], and compassion [*riqqat*].

Magnanimity means that one will not be affected by weakness, insolvency, comfort or wealth; that one does not feel anxious in weakness, and will not pride oneself in wealth; that one remains patient in the face of hardships and will endure them. On the contrary, to him wealth would be the same as poverty, and the change of circumstances would not affect him and would not change his character or make him feel despondent.

Self-control means remaining stable in such a way that one does not feel anxious in dangerous situations, and will not change one's behaviour or lose one's self-control in times of bereavement.

Detachment means that one does not fix one's heart on the fleeting pleasures, and will not grieve if one does not achieve what one desires, and will not be affected by any loss.

Steadfastness means that one remains firm in the face of hardships and will not be overcome by them.

Composure means remaining calm and confident in such a way that one can prove one's self-reliance in the face of the onslaught of troubles and will not lose one's temper as the result of any provocation.

Calm means not to get agitated in battles and during hostilities.

Bravery means the desire of the soul to get engaged in great enterprises in order to achieve fame and to be well remembered.

Endurance means to possess the ability to make use of physical powers in order to acquire praiseworthy attributes.

Modesty means that one does not regard oneself higher than others who are lower than him in their status.

Abstinence means that one does not show any weakness in preventing oneself from indulgence in what needs to be avoided and is demeaning.

Compassion means that one will be affected and will be saddened at seeing the pain of other human beings, without showing any sign of anxiety in one's demeanour.

Chastity has twelve subdivisions: first, modesty; second, adaptability; third, self-purification; fourth, tolerance; fifth, self-control; sixth, patience; seventh, contentment; eighth, dignity; ninth, continence; tenth, discipline; eleventh, freedom; twelfth, munificence.

Modesty means that one will be conscious of what is regarded as wrong behaviour, in order to refrain from committing that act and not leaving oneself open to blame.

Adaptability means possessing the ability to subjugate the self to the events and occurrences that take place, and find it easy to adjust.

Self-purification means that one will be strongly inclined towards perfecting oneself by acquiring praiseworthy qualities.

Tolerance means that one will not go to excess during the clash of opinions [debates] and while passing through different states, and will achieve one's goal without getting agitated.

Self-control means that one will remain calm at times when passion is aroused in such a way that one can be fully in control of one's emotions.

Patience means that one can resist the dictates of passion, so that one does not indulge in inappropriate pleasures.

Contentment means that one would not pay too much attention to the issues dealing with eating, drinking and clothing and suchlike, and would be satisfied with whatever happens.

Dignity means that one keeps calm when dealing with different issues and would avoid excessive haste, provided that one does not lose sight of the desired object.

Continence means that one will only engage in good and virtuous deeds and would not allow languor and idleness to interfere with taking action.

Discipline means that one should arrange and organize all one's affairs in the best possible way and in keeping with the requirements of each action.

Liberality means that one amasses wealth by engaging in useful and praiseworthy professions, and would then expend that wealth for worthy causes, and would refrain from making a living by engaging in disreputable professions.

Munificence means that one finds it easy to bestow wealth and other benefits

to others, so that one's wealth may be expended on the deserving and on necessary causes. Munificence is a category that has many subdivisions of its own, some of which are as follows: first, generosity [*karam*]; second, abstinence [*īthār*]; third, forgiveness [*'afw*]; fourth, compassion [*muruwwat*]; fifth, benevolence [*nabl*]; sixth, cooperativeness [*muwāsāt*]; seventh, magnanimity [*sabāḥat*]; eighth, self-restraint [*muṣāmaḥat*].

Generosity means that one finds it easy to donate huge sums of money for causes that are connected with public welfare and produce beneficial results, as it may be deemed necessary.

Abstinence means that one finds it easy to give up what one needs, especially from what belongs to one exclusively, as well as giving it to those who deserve it.

Forgiveness means that one finds it easy to overlook an evil deed, or does not demand punishment for it when one has the ability to inflict that punishment, or expect reward for a good deed that one has committed.

Compassion means that one has a sincere desire to forgive with the aim of helping others or giving to others more than what is required.

Benevolence means that one derives special pleasure from doing good deeds and adopting a generous attitude.

Cooperativeness means assisting one's friends, associates and those who are in need, and sharing one's wealth and food with them. Magnanimity means to give up happily to others those things that are not necessary to give up.

The subdivisions that come under the category of justice [*'adālat*] are twelve: First, sincerity [*ṣadāqat*]; second, solidarity [*ulfat*]; third, faithfulness [*wafā'*]; fourth, empathy [*shafaqat*]; fifth, familial good gesture [*ṣilay-i raḥim*]; sixth, compensation [*mukāfāt*]; seventh, trustworthiness [*ḥusn-i shirkat*]; eighth, good judgment [*ḥusn-i qaḍā'*]; ninth, friendliness [*tawaddud*]; tenth, submission [*taslim*]; eleventh, reliance [*tawakkul*]; twelfth, worship [*'ibādat*].

Sincerity means having genuine affection for others. Solidarity means to agree with the views and beliefs of a group and provide mutual help and assistance in order to improve the affairs of life.

Faithfulness means that one will not allow any transgression in the requirements of help and equality with others.

Empathy means that one feels any pain and sorrow that others feel, and would make every effort to dispel their pain and sorrow.

Familial ties means that one takes care of one's relatives and shares with them what one has of worldly goods.

Compensation means that when one receives a kindness from others one will return it in kind or even in excess of what one has received, and in the cases of loss and hurt one does not retaliate to the same extent.

Trustworthiness means that in cases of trade and dealings with others one acts on the basis of fairness, in the way that others expect.

Good judgment means that one respects the rights of others and judges them on the basis of their desert, and would not act in such a way that others feel indebted to him or apportion blame to them.

Friendliness means showing kindness to one's peers and to the people of learning, and to deal with others with cheerfulness and good words and whatever other praiseworthy attribute that may be required.

Submission means that one is content with whatever comes from God Almighty or with the demands of those whose obedience is required, and to deal with such cases happily and with contentment, even though they may not be to one's liking. Reliance means that in the affairs that are beyond human power and capability, and in the case of views and judgments that go beyond man's capabilities, one submits [to God] and would not allow any delay or defect in performing them [God's commandments], even though they may not be to his liking.

Worship means that one adores and bows down to one's creator, glorified be He, and those close to Him, such as angels, prophets, the Imams and the saints, God's peace be upon all of them; that one follows them and obeys their commandments and proscriptions. One should act in accordance with the teachings of the Lord of the *shari'ah*, and engage in prayer and supplication that compliments the above points. These are some of the classifications of different virtues. By combining some of these qualities with others, at times one can find a new terminology for them, while in some cases one cannot find a new terminology. Truly God is the source of success.

STATIONS OF THE GNOSTICS

Maqāmāt al-‘ārifīn

Translated for this volume by Maria Massi Dakake from Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī's *Maqāmāt al-‘ārifīn*, ed. with introduction and commentary by Qāsim Kākā'ī in *Andisha-yi dīnī*, 1, 2 (Shiraz, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 83–144.

O Allāh! Make me one of the knowers who is well acquainted with the stations of the knowers, but not one who stops there! We beseech You, for with You is the sustenance, not the station. Verily the stations are part of the spiritual etiquette of the masters of intellect. Where am I, and where is the intellect? I have been burned up with passionate longing and love!

*O Moses! Those well-versed in spiritual etiquette are one thing
Those burned up of soul and heart, are something else!¹
Though lame and limping, weary and without proper etiquette,
Cease not to crawl toward Him, and seek after Him!²*

Intellects can be a constraint (*‘iqāl*),³ and the preoccupation with [finding] safe refuges and resting places can be harmful.⁴ The sciences and ethics and rules of behaviour and spiritual etiquette are nothing more than a means of waking you from your ignorant slumber and sending you on your way with the [spiritual] wayfarers.

Since you see with intelligence and intellect, do not listen to those who know not, If I tell you one thing, you will forget your very self and see only the Truth! I, with my weakness and frailty, have been made capable of traversing the resting places (*manāzil*) and stations (*maqāmāt*), despite all the perils and dangers and terrors they hold.

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Mathnawī-i ma‘nawī*, Book II, from the story of Moses and the Shepherd. I am indebted to Dr Mohammad Faghfoory for this reference and those in notes 2 and 15.

2. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, Book III, from the story of the snake catcher and the serpent.

3. Here there is a play on words, with the word used for intellect, *‘aql*, being derived from the same root as *‘iqāl*, or ‘binding cord’. The author is expressing the well-known Sufi view that, even though the human intellect is mystically viewed as that which ‘binds’ the individual to the Universal Intellect, and ultimately to God, the intellect in its purely human, rational and cerebral manifestation, sometimes acts as a limit to the truer and more comprehensive, sapiential or ‘experiential’ knowledge of God that most Sufis were seeking.

4. The spiritual journeyman should never look for too much comfort in the various spiritual way stations he passes on his journey, lest he lose his focus on the real purpose of the journey and its ultimate goal.

Lure me with one of the many enticements of Thy intimacy,
 To a garden among the gardens enclosed in Thy holiness.
 And I shall be with Thee, and of Thee and toward Thee, and for Thee.
 And I shall see Thee in everything, even while everything has perished!

Enlighten me with the lights [with which Thou] aideth mankind, and lead me to what I seek and desire; and through [Thy] guidance and direction, make me victorious over all enemies; and through the attainment of what I desire, make me glad and joyful! Bless and grant peace to him [Muḥammad] who is deserving of his perfection.

To continue: Verily the poor and lowly one, Ghiyāth who is known as Maṣṣūr, says: These are some remarks (*ishārāt*) by which those worthy of guidance may be guided to the ultimate end; they are the remarks of the knowers concerning the paths of the noble ones and the resting places of the spiritual wayfarers and the stations of the knowers along [these paths]. This treatise comprises the concluding section of *The Gardens of Good Pleasure* and in this [treatise] I speak in the language of the masters of gnosis (*ʿirfān*), and reveal something of the spiritual awareness (*wijḍān*) I have realized. And God is the One from Whom we seek help and in Him we place our trust.

Verily the Chief of the Sages, Abū ʿAlī ibn Sīnā, in the ninth section of his *Ishārāt*,¹ made some remarks on this, and the most knowledgeable Imam [Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī]—may God beautify and ennoble him—said: ‘Verily this chapter is the most majestic [chapter] in this book, for it connects the Sufi sciences to what has come beforehand, and it is not overtaken by what comes after it.’²

It is clear that this statement might at first seem to be an error, as if he had made a mistake; for this book contains [discussions of] the states pertaining to the First Origin, which is the most majestic [of subjects], so how could his remarks about how to travel on the path through which one *might* reach perfection, with all of the hardship and effort it entails—and however easy it may seem in someone’s opinion, it is not easy in reality, as most people know—be more majestic than a perfection that is attained with only the slightest effort?

I say that it is possible to eliminate, through any number of considerations, the faulty conclusion of this argument, which vainly imagines that he is mistaken on this point. For it is quite possible that what he meant was that [this topic] was the most majestic of all those covered in the book in terms of its ultimate realization

1. A reference to Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbihāt*.

2. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, printed with Ibn Sīnā’s *Ishārāt wa’l-tanbihāt*, 4 vols., ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Egypt, 1960–1968), v. 4, p. 47. Ṭūsī’s commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s *Ishārāt* is one of his major philosophical works, and in it he includes and comments upon Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s earlier commentary on the *Ishārāt* and defends Ibn Sīnā against many of Rāzī’s criticisms. Here, however, he quotes with approval Rāzī’s praise of this section of Ibn Sīnā’s work.

and spiritual yield or in the way it was set down or arranged or laid out. Moreover, the majesty of the states pertaining to the Origin (*al-mabda'*) as an issue or a topic, does not necessarily entail that their description and discussion and examination and affirmation and attainment are similarly majestic. It is also possible that he considered [this topic] the most majestic because the ultimate goal of these sciences is the attainment of perfection, and this can only be achieved by drawing nearer to God and abandoning one's pre-occupation with all that is other than God, and this is only possible if one traverses these stations step by step, [it is not achieved] through intellectual arguments and discussion and debate, for these resting places and stations collectively form the path to the attainment and achievement of ultimate perfection, while all that [Ibn Sinā] had mentioned previously, was nothing but a sign or indication of this path. Moreover, the '*fā*' ('because') [in Rāzī's statement] might be merely for the purposes of eloquence or clarity, not for [indicating] a proof or causal factor.

Now that you know this and you know that what we hope to accomplish here is an important matter (*sha'n*) and a high station and place, [you will see that] this treatise of mine has been arranged in a number of sections, each dealing with a particular subject.

The First Treatise

Some General Remarks Concerning the Spiritual Wayfarers and the Ascetics and the Things they Abandon and Their Ultimate Goals

The ascetic is one who withdraws—purposefully and wilfully and by choice, not out of weakness or necessity or limitation (*quṣūr*) or as a trial—abandoning all interest in acquiring things through work and all concern for worldly and base things that pass away. He does not abandon or flee from these things only in order to obtain or acquire them; for one who truly abandons the world does not do this for the world. He who abandons the world for its own sake only makes a pretence of asceticism in order to give the impression that he is an ascetic. One who is ignorant will think he is [indeed] an ascetic, and think that this is true asceticism and that he is a true ascetic, and thus such a [false ascetic] is both misled and misleads others.

It is not necessary for the ascetic to abandon the world *per se*, but rather he must strive to arrange his affairs in accordance with the requirements of preparing himself well for his life in the world and in the hereafter. Moreover, he does not abandon only good and enjoyable things—and in this there is a noble and hidden secret, which I shall make plain.

The worshipper persists in his devotions, not through his devotions; and the same can be said of the ascetic. The one who draws near to God, and turns away from all that is other than God, is a knower in his [current] state and his ultimate end, in his outward appearance and in his future promise, each in its own way.

Any ascetic and worshipper who seeks reward, or else to avoid punishment, is not a true worshipper or ascetic, but rather one who works for a wage, a merchant seeking to purchase his sufficient needs, yet he will never know satisfaction. We, however, seek the reality of asceticism and worship and the truth concerning them and the true meaning of these terms.

The author of the *Ishārāt* [Ibn Sīnā] remarked, 'The knower seeks the First Truth for its own sake, and does not value anything above true knowledge of this.'¹ And the supremely knowledgeable Imam [Rāzī] said, 'There are some people who say that it is impossible for God, the All-High, to be desired for His Essence, and they claim that such desire is an attribute that can only be attached to contingent realities (*mumkināt*) because it requires that one of the two aspects of the object of desire be superior to another, and this makes no sense except in the case of contingent realities.'² He said, 'And the Shaykh [Ibn Sīnā] argued, in the beginning of the sixth section [of the *Ishārāt*] that if someone desires something, it must mean that acquiring it is preferable to not having it, and [thus the person's] primary effort is directed toward this acquisition [itself].'³ On this basis [he argues] that every seeker is ultimately seeking after perfection [itself]. Thus, whoever desires God, the All-High, desires not God, the All-High [as such], but rather the perfection of his own essence.'⁴ And [Rāzī] responded to both [views, saying], 'Both of these [arguments] are based upon the very conclusion they find desirable (*maṭlūb*),⁵ because they are built upon [the ideas, respectively] that desire can only attach to a contingent reality (*mumkin*) or to something through which the seeker seeks perfection. But this [premise] is the very claim he is seeking to prove! And we say that [desire] is attached to God, not to something other than Him.'⁶

And the commentator al-Muḥaqqiq [Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī] said: 'Desire that is attached to the object of the seeker's action logically requires the contingent nature of the object of desire, and the perfection of the seeker, not because of the attachment of desire to [it], but rather because it is an act (*fi'l*) and because it is something that is sought by the seeker through his desire. But in this case, the object of desire [i.e., the Truth] cannot be described in this way [i.e., as contingent].'⁷ Thus, the two opposing points of view are proved false.'⁸

I say: The falsity of these two [points of view] requires some consideration as well as a clearer argument. I see the purpose of [Ibn Sīnā's] remark (*ishārāh*) from a more beautiful and majestic perspective. And thus I say: If the seeker desires something,

1. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, v. 4, 68.

2. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, v. 4, 72 (quoting Rāzī).

3. See Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt*, v. 3, 122.

4. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ*, v. 4, 72 (quoting Rāzī).

5. i.e., the arguments are tautological in nature.

6. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ*, v. 4, 73 (quoting Rāzī).

7. i.e., because the object of desire is God, Himself.

8. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ*, v. 4, 73.

he seeks to acquire this thing for himself and so acquires it for himself (or he seeks to acquire something he desires for himself). Thus, if he seeks to acquire the desired thing for himself, then this is either a means to [acquire] something else, or else his intention is for the desired thing and its acquisition in itself, for itself, rather than as a means to the acquisition of something else. And it is clear that the acquisition of a desired thing is not always for the purpose of acquiring some other desired thing, or this would go on to infinity. Thus the knower seeks the First Truth in order to acquire it for himself, such that the Truth belongs to him and he belongs to the Truth—knowing, witnessing and experiencing the Truth. For him this acquisition is not a means of acquiring something else, such as pleasure or joy. Rather he ignores all that is other than the Truth, for he takes notice of nothing, and his thought is inspired by nothing, but the Truth. He is not even aware of himself, in this state of desire, such that he should seek to bring pleasure or joy to himself. His purpose is attainment and union, without concern for perfection or seeking perfection. And if he is aware of himself [at all], he is aware [of himself] only through the Truth and for the sake of the Truth, as I have explained.

And this is the only Truth worthy of seeking. And if the seeker desired what the commentator al-Muḥaqqiq [Ṭūsī] desired then everyone would be a knower, and every desired thing would be acquired right away, and it would not be important to seek to acquire it through arduous spiritual wayfaring and difficult journeying. Moreover, if this was the case, where would this lead him, and after acquiring what he desires, what more could he seek?

Now, it has not escaped you that much of what I have said [about this kind of desire] is similar to what we witness with regard to the love of created things. So what can this mean in the context of the love of One who possesses the most splendid perfection and the most sublime beauty?

I am deeply enamoured of both his gentleness and his wrath,
How wondrous, that I can be the lover of these two contraries!¹

The Second Treatise

It is well known among all people that the Prophet was sent from the Truth to creation. And this is only known in a general way, since the precise manner in which he was sent is not clear. Every school of thought, when seeking an explanation [for this] mentions things that are not clear or obvious to others, or even [consistent in] itself, when the matter is pressed further. And what is clear, as wise men affirm, is that he came for the purpose of properly organizing human affairs, and giving order to the life of this world and the next through divine revelation and inspiration. They

1. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Mathnawī-yi ma'navī*, Book I, from the story of the Merchant and the Parrot.

say: Human beings are social beings by nature, and they need a law to establish just relations [among them], and good governance and a proper mode and manner of living. They gave this much thought, and came to the conclusion summarized above. Yet, all of the purposes they mention [for God's sending the Prophet] only amount to [bringing about] a preferable rather than necessary [state of affairs], as is clear from their stated pretext, in that it might foster a certain improvement [in human affairs] and an increase in security.

Regarding the nature of the Prophet's knowledge (*ma'rifah*) and the veracity of his calling, I have already written about this, having formulated and given clear guidance on this issue in my treatise, *The Indicator of Guidance (Dalil al-hudā)*. And as for the view of the theologians, according to what is written in the books of theology, there is nothing in all of the words and passages found in [these works], that presents a conclusive argument that is appropriate to the level [of this topic]. And as for the opinion of the sages, they know through miraculous signs, not from what they have learned from the words of the theologians.

The author of the *Ishārāt* [Ibn Sinā] made a noble remark, saying: 'Since people are not able to undertake their own affairs independently, except through cooperation with another of their species and through negotiation with them and mutual assistance between them, so that each one has to give up something he wanted for himself in the interests of his companion, lest the individual be overwhelmed [with providing for all of his needs alone], which would be difficult, if it were possible at all, it is necessary that there be cooperation and justice between people preserved by a law imposed by a distinguished law-giver deserving of obedience because he has been uniquely gifted with signs that indicate that [his message] comes from his Lord. And there must be, for both the virtuous and the wicked, a recompense with the All-Powerful, the All-Aware. And the One who gives reward and establishes laws must be known. With this knowledge [there must also be] a means of preserving this knowledge; thus worship and remembrance of the One Who is Worshipped were made incumbent upon [people], and it was repeated to them many times so that remembrance would be preserved through repetition, and so that the [Prophet's] call for a lasting justice that will sustain the species will endure. And thus those who abide by it will be increased, not only by the great worldly benefits [it brings] but also by abundant reward in the next world, and for the knowers [there will be] an [additional] benefit given uniquely to them because have continuously turned their faces toward Him. So contemplate wisdom, mercy and divine blessing, and you will become aware of something that dazzles you with its wonders; then establish justice and be upright.'¹

And the Knowledgeable Imam [Rāzī] objects to this, saying: 'If what you mean by "necessary", when you say: "when the people needed a law-giver, his existence

1. Ibn Sinā, *al-Ishārāt*, v. 4, 60–67.

was made necessary” is essential necessity, this is impossible; and if what you mean is that [his existence] was made incumbent upon God—as the Mu‘tazilah say—then this is not in accordance with your perspective; and if what you mean is that the reason for this is [establishing] a system of organization that would bring about some good—and God the All-High is the originator of every good—and that this makes the existence of [the law-giver] incumbent upon Him, this is also false, because that which is better or best does not exist by necessity, otherwise all people would be compelled toward the good, and this would certainly be for the better. And when you say: “Miracles are an indication that the law-giver comes on behalf of God”, this is not consistent with your position, because the cause of miracles, according to you, exists on the psychic realm, and they are accessible to both prophets and their opponents among the magicians¹—as was discussed in the tenth section²—whereas the prophet is distinguished from his opponent through his call to only what is good, and not to what is evil, and the distinction between good and evil is an intellectual one. Thus miracles serve as no indication that their possessors are prophets. Moreover, the argument that the miracle points to the veracity of its possessor is built upon the premise of a free agent who is knowledgeable about all the temporal repercussions [of his actions], and you do not profess this view. Also, the argument about the punishment of the disobedient man cannot be upheld according to your principles, for the punishment of the disobedient man, in your view, is his soul’s [very] inclination toward desire for the world, even as it passes away from him. Thus you argue that if the disobedient man forgets his disobedience, his punishment is necessarily nullified.³

The commentator al-Muḥaqqiq [Ṭūsī] responds to this, saying: ‘By way of response to these principles, we say, regarding the first, that the dependence of all natural phenomena on their necessary purpose, along with the argument regarding divine concern [for His creation], as has already been mentioned, is sufficient to establish the reality of these phenomena and likewise to establish the reason for the phenomena on the basis of their ultimate purpose, such as the example one person made to the usefulness of chewing, which is its ultimate aim. And if this ultimate aim were not necessarily entailed in the existence of the phenomenon, then there would be no justification for it.’⁴ ‘As for the second, we say: Strange matters, such as miracles, can pertain either to words or actions, as we have seen; and the miracles unique to the prophets are not miracles of action, exclusively.

1. A reference to the Qur’ānic story of Moses at the court of Pharaoh, where he is challenged by magicians capable of performing supernatural and seemingly miraculous feats, just as Moses is able to perform real miracles through God’s Power; yet the magicians themselves are overcome by the righteousness and devotions of Moses to God, and so become true believers, even in the face of Pharaoh’s wrath (see Qur’ān 7:103–126).

2. Ibn Sinā, *al-Ishārāt*, v. 4, 155–157.

3. Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ*, v. 4, 65–66.

4. Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ*, v. 4, 66–67.

Rather, it is the combination of miraculous actions with miraculous words that is unique to them, and serves as an indication of their veracity. Regarding the third, we say—in addition to what has been said about knowledge and power—that the observation of miracles, which are the recognizable marks of the souls of prophets, are an indication of the perfection of their souls, and [they] are required in order to verify the truth of their words. Regarding the fourth, we say: committing an act of disobedience requires the presence of a faculty rooted in the soul, which is a necessary pre-requisite for its punishment. And forgetting the act cannot remove this faculty, thus it cannot result in the nullification of the punishment.¹

I say: The various aspects of this debate contained in the above questions and responses, are well known to the masters of intellect. And my own view of this issue [requires] several responses, and I will explain some of them now.

I say: The first thing to consider is that the miracle is a preliminary indication of prophecy, so that when it is brought by one claiming prophecy, the people will obey him, for its purpose is [to engender] obedience. He might be able to obtain obedience without a miracle, for example, [through] a decisive argument or proof, or through the sword or the spear, or through preaching and [the demonstration of] virtue. After this, one should look to see that [the claimant's] purpose in securing obedience is concern for the state of those who obey him and the proper ordering of their situation or the arranging of affairs with regard to their property, and not merely for seeking some personal gain, such as wealth or status, or the attainment of some beloved or desired thing through this status; and [one should see] that he governs through divine inspiration (*wahy*), possessing signs (*'alāmāt*) recognized by the learned ones; a person familiar with his law (*shar'*) should find nothing intellectually objectionable—provided his intellect is not tainted with distortion or arrogance—and no valid refutation of his proof or argument; and [one should see that] he does not take lives or honour or money arbitrarily and without proper order (*nizām*) and justice; and that he confirms sound principles of faith, indicated by clear proofs, such as the oneness of the Creator; and that he removes impurities; and that he eliminates the [negative] qualities that usually pertain to created beings through the use of rules (*qawā'id*) that are beneficial for the proper ordering of the human state; and that he calls them to the abode of peace, and to the attainment of reward and recompense; [if all of these are the case] then he is a true prophet. Furthermore, it is known what is revealed [to a prophet] may be a miracle (*mu'jizah*) in itself, and this is a more enduring [miracle], and for a universal prophet (*nabī 'āmm*), the open call (*da'wah*) is more appropriate and suitable.

The second observation I would make is that miracles, in their opinion, have their origin in the practical faculty (*al-quwwah al-'amaliyyah*), which is one of two

1. Ibid. 67–68.

faculties in the immaterial human soul: the intellectual and the practical. These two faculties mutually support one another, such that a deficiency in one results in a deficiency in the other, and the soundness and health of one [results in] the soundness and health of [the other]. The appearance of a miracle indicates the strength of the practical faculty, which requires the strength of the contemplative faculty and its soundness and health. And the perfection of that faculty is the basis of prophecy (*nubuwwah*), as indicated by a certain proof, as we will demonstrate in the rest of our treatise.

If it troubles you to think that wonders (*gharā'ib*) may be manifested even by evil souls, and that this [ability] is based on the strength of their practical faculty, and so how can one ascertain whether these souls have been the recipients of prophecy, then it should be known that not every wondrous thing is a [prophetic] miracle, and that such wonders are not manifested by, and do not originate from, the faculties of these evil souls alone, nor does their emergence derive from their souls and their [souls'] faculties, except through the empowerment, support and assistance of [certain] physical conditions (*ḥālāt badaniyyah*) and base techniques (*'amaliyyāt daniyyah*), and artificial bodily manipulations (*ḥiyāl ṣanā'iyyah jismiyyah*)—be these manifest or hidden—not with aid and support of things divine. The true miracle, however, appears through the strength of the practical faculty alone, or through the aid of things holy and divine, without the support or assistance of these other things mentioned above, such as [physical] conditions, base bodily techniques and lowly physical supports. And when they are [true miracles], then they are holy, hidden things that are not openly manifest. And they may not be manifest [even] to the one who performs them. This is clear from what we have already determined concerning the true nature of magic, saintly miracles (*karāmah*) and [prophetic] miracles (*mu'jizah*), and the way in which wondrous things can be manifested by human souls, both evil and good. And it might help you [to know] that whoever examines [the matter] carefully will see that any practitioner of magic, no matter what kind of trick he uses, is practising [nothing more than] sleight of hand. Be certain about what I have asserted, and abandon the views of those who fancy themselves philosophers and the words of the theologians, for these are blameworthy.

Thirdly, in my view, the human, rational [faculty], if it is base and bodily, cannot be empowered in practice or action by anything other than the body, or [some] bodily instrument; and so if a miracle is made to appear without these [supports], it is obvious that it is not immersed in [worldly] attachments, and that its execution cannot be prevented by any [external] hindrance. Thus it can readily be accepted as coming from the divine effulgence, set forth in order to prepare the way for marvellous things and [the establishment of] beneficial rules for the governance of men.

Fourthly, in my view—and I consider this the most important and precise [point]—the human rational [soul] is an empty mirror, [made] to receive

beautiful, holy and divine light, while bodily attachments are dark veils that need to be removed. When [these veils] are lifted, holy, divine rays of light are revealed and shine upon them, and something appears and becomes manifest in them that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and through them, great works appear and miracles are performed. Thus the [true] miracle is an unveiling of illumination and a revelation (*inkishāf*) that necessarily accompanies prophecy, without becoming distorted (*inḥirāf*) or going away (*inṣirāf*). And what we wish to reveal will only be revealed to the one who seeks to uncover the eye veiled by passion. It cannot be revealed through words alone, without the [receptive faculty of] the imagination; and whoever claims that these are just vain thoughts and imaginings, should take a look at a mirror set afire by the light of daybreak.

Now one who is devoid of good and sound thinking, might well think that all of these points are erroneous; but an individual with proficient insight will be able to see the soundness of each of them and their freedom from all forms of error.

If a man does not have a sound eye,
It is no wonder that he doubts even as the light of day shines forth!

And whoever desires perfection, through the removal of vain thoughts (*awḥām*), should consider what is said in my work *The Pillars of the Garden of Contentment* (*Arkān riyāḍ al-riḍwān*), for it contains a fully satisfying explanation; and in [my works] *al-Ḥikmah al-Manṣūriyyah* and *al-Lāmi'ah bi'l-lawāmi' al-nūriyyah* one will find matters made known through direct witnessing.

Furthermore, I say: It is also possible to respond to the words of the Imam in other ways, which have occurred to me this moment and for which I will now give a full explanation and precise formulation in the language of the people of gnosis. One response is to say that if the claimant to prophecy does not possess perfect gnosis, his call will not be heeded, and so he does not truly possess this rank (*sha'n*). But, as you will see, if he possesses the station of contentment and submission concerning the knowledge and understanding that has been given to him, and at the same time he does not manifest any [particular] motive or will regarding the [miraculous things or messages] that become manifest through him, nor any [personal] intention in their manifestation, nor any resolute purpose, nor any concern for himself or his actions or for anything else that could be the source of the manifestation of his authority, then all that he brings is clearly from God, the All-Mighty. 'You did not throw when you threw, but rather it was God who threw.' (8:17)

Another response is to say that the knower desires nothing but the Truth, and this is his only desire, and his mission is [accomplished] through His will, and his miracles come through His help.

Another response is to say that if a person is preoccupied with the proper arrangement of [worldly] affairs, and the beneficial ordering of society, he will be

distracted from the Truth by created things and he will not, therefore, be a knower. For his call and his prophecy are not a matter of his own choice; rather they come only through a command from the Truth, and a choice that seems like compulsion. 'He does not speak from his own desires, verily it is nothing but an inspiration revealed.' (53:3-4)

And it is possible to know his [level of] gnosis through his commands and signs, some of which pertain to the created order and some of which concern matters of morality and ethics (*khulqīyyah*). I have clarified this in two treatises found in *al-Ḥikmah al-Manṣūriyyah al-lāmi' bi'l-lawāmi' al-nūriyyah*, one of them dealing with spiritual perspicacity (*firāsah*) and its indications, and the other dealing with [ethical] qualities and faculties of the soul and its necessary attributes and obligations.

The Third Treatise

Verily, spiritual practice and wayfaring entails some preliminary requirements and fundamental principles, as well as [modes of] completion and perfection. I will give some indications concerning everything that pertains to this subject and to the subject as a whole.

The first subject: preliminary requirements

Determination that is resolute, and not weak or deficient, lest [the seeker] become confused in different situations, for he must not divert his concentration from what he hopes to accomplish.

Intrinsic truthfulness, both in his actions and deeds, so that he will be firmly grounded, and so that his capacity for falsehood, if it ever existed, will disappear, for this corrupts one's dreams and inspirations.

Renunciation of whatever diverts his inner focus (*sirr*) from the goal and causes him to be preoccupied with what he should avoid.

Constant turning toward God, so that he will not turn his attention to what is other than God.

Good character and this means undertaking actions sincerely for God and not associating anyone with Him, even for a moment, ever, nor associating with anything else that might divert his concentration away from God, and making it[self], instead, a focus of his attention. The [Prophet] (blessings and peace be upon him) said: '*Shirk* among my community is more hidden than a black ant crawling on a massive boulder in the darkest night.'¹

The second subject: fundamental principles

These are both the existential attributes and privations [of the seeker], and within

1. A similar *ḥadīth* can be found in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, 16 vols. (Beirut, 1949), v. 4, p. 403.

each category, there are outward and inward aspects. As for the privations, they include true asceticism, which means removing oneself from all that distracts the inner self (*sirr*) from the Truth. The outward aspect of this is the abandonment of all things that [either] worry or satisfy; and inwardly it means the purification of the inner self (*sirr*) from thoughts which lead toward the realm of deception and which veil one from the lights of the realm of joy. Some Sufis claim that this [asceticism] is based upon a [kind of] business transaction with God, the All-High, [which, on their part] entails eating little food, taking little sleep and doing little talking. But in my view, it should mean exercising moderation in all things, both in quantity and in quality, for this is [true] uprightness and temperance, for too little [of something] is often more harmful than too much.

The real purpose of asceticism is [the cultivation of] reverential fear (*taqwā*), and it has several stations. The first is abandoning whatever does not concern one, outwardly or inwardly, and this engenders patience; then detaching oneself from all actions, which comes through [a realization of] the dependence of everything on the Universal Agent, and this engenders trust [in God] (*tawakkul*); then the avoidance of all ambitions and desires, being resigned to the fact that nothing shall come to pass that has not already been determined and decreed, and this engenders contentment; then the certainty that His knowledge and power encompass all things, and that everything that occurs, occurs only through His power and according to His knowledge, whereby one can know it is only for the best, and that there is no opposing what He has decreed, and this engenders submission (*taslīm*). And we will present further clarification of this from other perspectives.

As for the necessary existential qualities, they include: outwardly, worship (*ibādah*) and, inwardly, a subtleness of heart (*sirr*) that can allow for the [penetration] of the divine effulgence (*ḥayd*). Worship transforms the 'soul that commands [to evil] (*al-naḥs al-ammārah*)'¹ into the soul at peace (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*)² through [establishing] legal rules and guidelines, which mould its faculties (*quwāhumā*) toward an uncontested focus on the Truth; and if [the soul] does not have to be compelled into focusing attention on the Truth, and does not resist the path toward the Holy, then indeed it may be that it has already been prepared and appointed and made ready [for this].

1. A phrase that appears in the Qur'ān (12:53) and is usually understood to mean the basest level of the soul that draws the individual toward the world and evil. The Qur'ān also mentions the 'blaming soul (*al-naḥs al-lawwāmāh*)' [75:2]; understood to mean the soul that reproaches itself for its evil deeds and strives to return the soul to righteousness and the 'soul at peace (*al-naḥs al-muṭma'innah*)' (see note below).

2. A phrase that appears in Qur'ān 89:27, and is usually understood to mean the soul that has transcended the struggle between its baser and nobler desires, and achieved a lasting and sanctified peace. In this verse, the 'soul at peace' is told to return to its Lord both pleasing and well-pleased.

As for purification of the heart (*talṭīf al-qalb*), this entails lifting the natural veils from the face of the heart so that it can admit the rays of holy light, and [so that it can acquire]—through musical melodies and poetry appropriate to holy matters, and through the spiritual concepts (*ma'ānī*) necessary to make one's thoughts compliant (*idh'ān al-wahm*), and to [be able to] discourse with intelligent men (*adhkiyā'*), and to be receptive to their words and sayings regarding the path (*ṭarīqah*) and virtue (*akhlāq*), especially when they are connected with melodious sound (*naghmah rakhīmah*) and beautiful voice (*ṣawt ḥasan*) and eloquent expression (*'ibārah balīghah*), and the recitation of divine revelation, and pure, spiritual love (*al-'ishq al-'afīf al-rūḥānī*), to which they beckon—the desire to witness the light of the Truth in the mirror of the qualities of the Beloved.

And the first thing encountered by those beginning their spiritual exercises are fleeting glimpses of quickly-vanishing flashes of light that shine forth from illuminated horizons (*al-uḥuq al-nūrī*) and are then quickly extinguished. Then [these flashes] start to come consecutively and successively. Some of them are pleasing lights (*anwār ladhīdah*) which affect the limbs and especially the mind, in a sweet and pleasant way that increases one in affection and love (*'ishq*), and engenders humility and contrition. Some of them are terrifying lights of awe and power that engender fear and excitement (*inzi'āj*) in the body, changing pride and haughtiness into compliance of character, just as the first [kind] engenders love toward Him.

Then these become fixed [in the heart of the seeker] and they are converted into divine tranquillity (*sakīnah*). Then he becomes illuminated by the light of the Truth and sees [the Truth] in everything. Then he becomes oblivious to himself and sees only the Truth and Its light, and if he regards himself [at all], it is through the light of the 'light upon light';¹ and verily He is the All-Encompassing Observer of the secrets of all things.

And this summary is meant to demonstrate to you the beauty (*jamāl*) of the spiritual state[s], and to remove the veil from them in a general way. And in what follows, there will be a detailed explanation of each of the states by way of review, for this will engender remembrance, and provide numerous other benefits, and [allow for] further explanation through different modes of expression—and do not imagine that [this means that] there is any change in them, for verily in different modes of expression there are subtle points and indications.

The third subject: concerning stations

Verily the Knowers are the knowers of stations, because they come to know them through an ordered progression:

A The stations comprising the beginning of the path are: 1) faith (*īmān*); 2)

1. A phrase from the well-known Light Verse found in Qur'ān 24:35.

constancy); 3) proper intention; 4) truthfulness; 5) contrition; and 6) sincerity. 'Faith' is certitude in the perfect mode of existence that [the seeker] must strive toward and try to perfect in himself. 'Constancy' means constancy with regard to this faith, and certitude, so that he will not waver, and his mind will not entertain any hesitation concerning it. 'Intention' is resolute purpose concerning this furthest of all goals. And 'truthfulness' here means truthfulness in all that originates from him by way of speech, intentions, decisions, beliefs and actions. True 'contrition' comes through the return to the Truth, and it is realized through a constant, inward concentration on the Truth, and through invoking [the Truth] in outward speech, and being cautious about obeying [the Truth] in one's actions. And 'sincerity' is the absence of the blemish of hypocrisy in one's speech and actions and intentions and decisions.

- B And they have affirmed that the removal of spiritual obstacles derives from: 1) repentance (*tawbah*); 2) asceticism (*zuhd*); 3) poverty (*faqr*); 4) spiritual exercise (*riyāḍah*); 5) examination of conscience (*muḥāsabah*); and 6) piety (*taqwā*). 'Repentance' is turning away from sin, and here it means [turning away from] all that prevents one from perfect concentration on the Truth, including inclinations, states, speech, thoughts and actions. All of these are sins for the spiritual wayfarer, even if they are not for others. I have already taught you about 'asceticism'. [With regard to 'spiritual poverty' (*faqr*)], the one who is poor (*faqīr*), traditionally, means one who does not possess wealth, or if he does possess [some wealth], he does not have enough to satisfy his needs in a given condition. But the 'poverty' that is listed among the stations [of the Knowers] is the lack of desire for wealth or acquisitions, and the lack of any effort made to acquire that for which one has no need; but if [a thing] is obtained without effort and without diverting one's attention from the Truth, then there is no harm in taking or keeping it. This is not [the poverty] that results from negligence (*ghaflah*) or ignorance (*jahl*), or destruction (*itlāf*) or prodigality (*iṣrāf*) or squandering (*badhr*) or folly (*ḥamāqah*) or weakness, or the expenditure of money or effort for base, material desires, or fear of punishment or greed for reward. Rather [the knower] abandons [these things] because of a lack of concern for anything that diverts his attention from the Truth. And it is well known to the people of intelligence (*nuhā*) that this is a kind of asceticism; but for [the Knowers], it is further distinguished by [the practice of] invocation (*dhikr*) as a means of remembrance and affirmation, or [as a means of] keeping the spiritual wayfarer away from some of the paths of [creaturely] habit.

Here, there is a well-known analogy. Two traditions are related from the Prophet. One of them is, 'Poverty is my pride (*al-faqrū fakhri*)',¹ and the second

1. This *ḥadīth* is not found in the canonical collections of Sunni or Shi'i *ḥadīth*, but it is widely quoted in Sufi works.

is, 'Verily poverty is near to infidelity (*kufr*)'.¹ And in order to reconcile the two, the commentators and traditionists have said: poverty can pertain both to need and to weakness; and [the poverty] that is his pride is his need for God the All-High; and [the poverty] that is near to infidelity is weakness. And the idea underlying this reconciliation of the contradiction should be clear enough. Whoever understands what we have indicated will not be confused by this.

'Asceticism', in ordinary language, denotes a state that occurs in a living being when one faculty obeys another and prevents it from all movements except those that are pleasing to it. But the meaning of the term here is the creation of a faculty in the animal soul, through which it becomes accustomed to submitting itself to the human intellectual [faculty], so that it is no longer moved by the demands of the irascible or concupiscent powers toward things that are harmful or not beneficial for the perfecting of the human rational [faculty].

And what they mean by 'examination of conscience' (*muḥāsabah*) is a constant weighing of one's disobedient and obedient acts, and making the effort to increase the latter and to keep it always in excess of the former. And piety is to be wary of and to avoid anything that thwarts or prevents seeking perfection and attainment of perfection.

- c After this, the journey in search of spiritual perfection demands several [other] states. They are: 1) solitude (*khalwah*); 2) meditation (*tafakkur*); 3) fear (*khawf*) and sadness (*ḥuzn*); 4) hope (*rajā'*); 5) patience (*ṣabr*); and 6) gratitude (*shukr*).

'Solitude' is the soul's resting peacefully in an empty place, away from all that diverts its attention from the state it is seeking. And 'meditation' is pondering and contemplating what can be seen on the horizons and in the soul, which allows a person to realize the perfection of his Creator.

By 'fear' they mean the fear of anything that might incapacitate or limit the seeking after perfection (*takmil*), and 'sadness' [here] means sadness for all such [incapacitating or limiting] things that have occurred previously. And these two [states] are conducive to the seeking of perfection, as is well known to the masters of [self]-perfection. By 'hope' they mean the hope of attaining what is desired and refusing to despair of it. And fear and hope have been mentioned in Persian, when it was said:

Do not be heedless, for a man's trusted mount may lose its footing in the rocky desert,

But do not lose hope, for the raucous wine-drinkers can, in one instant and alone, arrive at the destination.

1. While this exact statement is likewise not found in canonical *ḥadīth* collections, there is a report in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd that the Prophet used to make supplications to God to protect him from both poverty and infidelity (see *K. al-Adab, ḥadīth* 5071).

What is meant by 'patience' is endurance and perseverance in the face of whatever may befall you of matters determined or decreed [by God], without suffering pain or confusion about what God has determined or decreed.

It has been related that Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī was tried in his old age with frailty and weakness and the Imam Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Bāqir, blessings upon his forefathers and blessings and peace upon him—went to visit him, and inquired about his state. Jābir said: 'My state is such that old age is more beloved to me than youth, and sickness is [more beloved to me] than health, and death is [more beloved to me] than life.' Al-Bāqir said: 'I am pleased with whatever God decrees for me, and I love it. If He decrees old age, then [I love] old age, and if He decrees youth, [I love] youth, and if He decrees sickness, [I love] sickness and if he decrees health, [I love] health; if He decrees death, then [I love death] and if He decrees life, [I love] life.' When Jābir heard his words, he kissed him and said: 'The Prophet of God spoke truly [when he said]: You will see after me one who bears my name, who will split open knowledge like the bull splits open the earth. And he will be called Bāqir (the one who splits open), for he is truly '*bāqir*', splitting open the knowledge of those who came before and those who come later.'

'Gratitude' in ordinary language is praise for the one who bestows a gift in response to that gift. [The Knowers] say: gratitude is realized through a consciousness of the Bestower of gifts and of all of His many gifts, and a sense of joy at receiving them, which is directed toward the one who bestows them, as well as through making strenuous efforts to earn His good pleasure, and praising Him outwardly, and magnifying Him in a worthy manner, all the while knowing that this is inadequate, and that one's gratitude can never suffice all of the many gifts [bestowed by] God the All-High.

- D Then they affirm the states that are acquired along the path of spiritual way-faring, which are: 1) will (*irādah*); 2) desire (*shawq*); 3) love (*maḥabbah*); 4) knowledge (*ma'rifah*); 5) certitude (*yaqīn*); and 6) tranquillity (*sukūn*).

'Will' is an outward reality, and it comes with the awareness of the object of desire (*murād*) as well as of its perfection and of its absence, so that one acquires 'desire' (and 'love', for this follows the acquisition of 'desire'). 'Love' is the inclination toward that which imparts sweetness (*ladhdhah*) or perfection when it is attained; whereas '*ishq*' is extreme love. In fact, no reality is devoid of [love], since it flows through all of the progeny [of Adam], and it either comes through natural inclination or predisposition, or it is acquired wilfully. The former is there in the beginning, and emanates and flows into the latter, and no existent thing can be devoid of it, each in its own particular way. I have given a detailed explanation of this in its proper place.

No heart is free of the chains of love.

There is no happiness for the one who cannot be happy with this.

As for the second [state, 'desire'], it is generally pertains to the human type and has its origin in several things. One of them is pleasure, either bodily or spiritual, illusory or real; another is mercy and compassion, either metaphorical or real; and yet another is resemblance, either in essence or attribute, and this may be either particular or general [in nature]. And for the seeker, 'love' is love of that perfection which completes him, whether it occurs naturally or through his own will or a mixture [of the two], depending upon whether his love of perfection is natural or wilful in nature, and whether it is real or undertaken for some other purpose that cannot be considered true perfection.

And those who know, know that hope (*rajā'*) and fear and dread and desire and intimacy and expansive joy (*inbisāt*) and trust [in God] (*tawakkul*) and contentment and submission, are all attributes of love (*maḥabbah*). When [love] takes the form of the mercy of the Beloved, it engenders hope; and [when it comes from] observing His awesomeness (*haybatihī*), it engenders fear; when one has not yet arrived at [the Beloved], it engenders desire; and [when one] has arrived, it engenders intimacy. With much intimacy comes expansive joy (*inbisāt*); and certainty of His solicitous concern (*'ināyah*) engenders trust (*tawakkul*) [in Him]. Through seeking the good in whatever comes from the Beloved, one acquires contentment, and the awareness of one's own weakness and deficiency, [in contrast to] the perfected power of the Beloved, and this brings surrender.

'Knowledge' here means knowledge of God the All-High, in the highest degree. They liken it to the knowledge of fire, which can be known in different aspects and different degrees: First, one can know fire by being told about its qualities and properties; second, [one can know it] from seeing its smoke and thus being made aware of its existence and some of its properties; third, one can witness something that gives warning about what [fire] can do, such that one derives some benefit from this; fourth, one can discover the various benefits that come from [fire], such that it becomes something pleasant to acquire. And [only] the one who knows [fire] in all of these degrees can be considered to possess knowledge [of it].

Beyond this, there are additional levels [of knowledge], and with these one comes to know [fire] with certitude: the first is to be able to see other things through the light of the fire; the second is to be able to see the fire [itself]; the third is to be personally affected by [the fire] in some way, whereby some of its effects (*af'ālihā*) becomes manifest; and beyond these lie the highest degree to which one can see or know [fire]. And these four, along with the previous four make eight—the same number as the gates of Paradise.

Thus the one who knows God, the All-High, at the first level is one of the common people, who practise blind imitation [of religious authorities] (*taqlid*); those at the second [level] are the people of intellectual speculation (*naẓar*) and the masters of argumentation and thought; and those at the third [level] are the believers in the unseen. Those of the fourth [level] are those who know Him from behind a veil. Those [who know God] at the first of the [more advanced] set of levels are those who possess knowledge of certitude (*'ilm al-yaqīn*); those at the second advanced level possess certitude in itself (*'ayn al-yaqīn*); those at the third advanced level possess the truth of certitude (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*); and we will give some indication of the fourth advanced level [presently].

As for tranquillity, it is of two kinds: the first is that which belongs to the people of deficiency and those heedless of the [imperative] of perfection, and so can be called 'heedlessness' (*ghaflah*); the second is that which is attained after having sought and arrived at perfection, and this can be called 'peace' (*iṭmi'nān*)—not the peace that comes through simple faith (*īmān*), but rather [the peace] that is itself true belief.

- E Now we will make some remarks about the auspicious states belonging to those who have attained, and they are: 1) trust in God; 2) contentment 3) surrender; 4) recognition of unity; 5) union; and 6) oneness.

What they mean by 'trust in God' is the entrusting of all one's affairs to God, the All-High, for if the servant knows that God, the All-High, is the most knowledgeable and the most powerful and the most generous and the most merciful, he will entrust all his affairs to Him, and be content with whatever God has determined and decreed for him. This engenders contentment and a lack of aversion to whatever may be decreed or whatever fate may require of him. One of the Knowers said: 'Verily God is content with the servant when the servant is content with Him', and thus He is only content [with the servant] when [the servant] is content.

What they mean by 'surrender' is the surrender of all one's affairs to God, the All-High, thus to surrender all that relates to oneself to Him, the All-High, such that one says, 'Verily this belongs to the All-High, and is from Him; it does not belong to me and is not from me.' They say that this is [a state] beyond contentment; for in contentment, everything that comes from God, the All-High, is agreeable to one's nature; whereas in surrender, one surrenders his very nature and all [possibility of] agreeing or disagreeing; everything is His, and nothing of [one's] nature or inclination remains at all.

Now the 'recognition of unity' can mean two things. First it can mean a confirmation that God is one, and this is the beginning of gnosis, which we have already discussed. This derives primarily from belief. Second it can mean unshakeable confidence that all that is manifest is from Him, and that nothing

other than He can manifest [something] or be manifest. Everything is from Him and belongs to Him. This is unity in actuality, for He has no partner in existence or in bringing [things] into existence. Indeed with regard to existence [the Qur'ān says]: 'everything perishes save His Face'. (28:88)

But *tawhīd* means to make [or consider] something one, while union is the process of becoming one. In the case of *tawhīd*, there is always the taint of pretentious (*takalluf*), which there is not in union. Thus when oneness becomes firmly rooted in the innermost heart of the spiritual wayfarer, such that he has no concern for anything other [than God], then he has reached [the state] of union. The meaning of union here is not a process by which the servant becomes one with the Truth—as those deficient [in understanding] falsely imagine—but rather what is meant is that [the servant] sees nothing other than Him, for he does not see multiplicity, but rather sees all things vanish in His Light and His Presence.

Between thou and I there is an 'I-ness' that crowds me,
So with thy I-ness remove my 'I-ness' from between us.¹

And 'oneness' is beyond union, for in union there is still the taint of multiplicity (or duality) that there is not in oneness. And so here ends the journey and the wayfaring, thought and remembrance, seeking, seeker and Sought. 'Once words reach God, they stop.' These are the way stations of the spiritual wayfarers, the stations of the Knowers, as known and taught by the Knowers. And I see another path which is nearer to God, the All-High. I have remarked upon it in [my works] *al-Ḥikam wa'l-ma'ārif al-manṣūriyyah* and *al-Lamī'ah bi'l-lawāmi' al-nūriyyah*.

An insight

A contemporary is reported to have said that gnosis can only be attained after making this journey and arriving at all of these way stations. But in my view, it is not useful to establish this as a universal rule. Rather, I think that any one of [these way stations] can be the original for gnosis, and gnosis can be the starting-point for any one of them. The two are mutually fulfilling, and one may arrive at gnosis via [these way stations], just as one might arrive at them via gnosis. All is entrusted to the will of God, the All-High, and all is determined and decreed. So have certitude in this, and do not follow vain desires.

1. This is a part of a poem by the fourth/tenth-century Sufi mystic Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj. See *Le Dīwān d'al-Ḥallāj*, trans. and ed. Louis Massignon (Paris, 1955), p. 90.

Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn Khafrī

A significant figure of the School of Shiraz, whose importance in the fields of the philosophy of science and astronomy is being discovered only now, Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn Khafrī (known also as Faḍīl-i Khafrī) was probably born in the 1480s in the town of Khafr near Shiraz and died near Kashan *circa* 956/1550. He studied in Shiraz under Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī and other notable teachers of that city and became an outstanding figure in the fields of philosophy, *kalām*, and the religious sciences as well as the mathematical and astronomical sciences. He may, in fact, be considered as the foremost Islamic astronomer of the tenth/sixteenth century and one of the major figures in the later history of Islamic astronomy. At the same time he was such a notable authority in the religious sciences, especially jurisprudence (*fiqh*), that when Muḥaqqiq-i Karakī, the leading Shī'i scholar of the era of the Safavid king Shah Ismā'īl, went on a journey, he would appoint Khafrī as his representative and would advise people to refer to the latter for any questions they had concerning religious matters. Khafrī is an outstanding example of a religious *'ālim* who was also a major scientist as well as philosopher and theologian.

He wrote some twenty works which include *Ithbāt al-wājib* (Proof of the Necessary Being), *al-Risālah fi'l-hayūlā* (Treatise on Prime Matter) and *al-Ḥāshiyah 'alā ḥikmat al-'ayn* (Glosses upon *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* [Wisdom from the Source by Dabīrān-i Kātibī-i Qazwīnī]) on philosophy; *Risālat 'ibrat al-fuḍalā'*: *Jadhr al-aṣamm* (Treatise on the Bewilderment of the Learned: The Liar's Paradox) on logic; *al-Ḥāshiyah 'alā'l-tajrīd* (Glosses upon *Kitāb al-Tajrīd* [The Book of Catharsis by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī]) on Shī'i *kalām*; *Tafsīr āyat al-kursī* (Commentary on the Throne Verse [of the Qur'ān]) on Qur'ānic commentary; *Risālat al-raml* (Treatise on Geomancy) on one of the occult or hidden sciences; *al-Takmilah fi sharḥ al-tadhkirah* (The Completion on the Commentary upon the *Tadhkirah* [The Treasury of Astronomy by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī]) and *Muntaha'l-idrāk fi sharḥ Nihāyat al-idrāk* (The Termination of Understanding, Commentary upon *Nihāyat al-idrāk* [The Limit of Understanding by Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī]) on astronomy; and *Ḥall mā lā*

yanḥall (Resolving That Which Could Not Be Resolved) on the philosophy of science and astronomy.

Although known primarily in the later periods of Islamic philosophy for his glosses upon Ṭūsī's *al-Tajrīd*, Khafri is particularly important for his critique of Ptolemaic astronomy and his discussions about the relation between mathematical models and physical phenomena, a subject that belongs properly to the domain of the philosophy of science. In his *Ḥall mā lā yanḥall*, which is a short but very significant work in this field, Khafri discusses the role of mathematical representation in astronomy, the functionality of predictive models and their relation to actual physical phenomena. He delves into the issue of the art of mathematical theorizing itself in relation to physical phenomena. He points to four different mathematical models for the explanation and description of the motion of Mercury and seeks to demonstrate that mathematics is another language to describe physical phenomena. He asserts that in fact there is not a single mathematical model that contains the truth pertaining to a physical phenomenon thereby refuting the view of some other Muslim scientists such as Quṭb al-Dīn Shirāzī. For Khafri physical phenomena, which include the astronomical, do not yield unique mathematical solutions. Rather, mathematical language is separable from the phenomena it describes. In fact Khafri compares mathematical language to poetic language. This treatise reveals the significance of Khafri as a philosopher of science, as his works on astronomy demonstrate his mastery as an astronomer and those on theology and philosophy his significance as an astute theologian and philosopher.

In this chapter we have included two treatises by Khafri, *al-Risālah fi'l-hayūlā* (Treatise on Prime Matter) and *Risālat 'ibrat al-fuḍalā': Jadhr al-aṣamm* (Treatise on the Bewilderment of the Learned: The Liar's Paradox) on logic. In *al-Risālah fi'l-hayūlā*, Khafri begins by explaining Ibn Sina's view on the form of corporeality as stipulated in the *Shifā'* and continues by offering a number of proofs concerning the nature of prime matter. Various modalities of corporeality and views of other philosophers such as Ījī are discussed here.

In the *Risālat 'ibrat al-fuḍalā'*, having presented Dawānī's solution to the paradox, Khafri first presents his critique of Dawānī and then offers his own solution in three responses.

S. H. Nasr

TREATISE ON PRIME MATTER

Risālah fi'l-hayūlā

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Shams al-Dīn Khafrī, *Risālah fi'l-hayūlā*, ed. A. Bahādūrī, Ph.D. dissertation, Razavi University (Mashhad, 1379 Sh./2000).

I. On the Premises Affirming Prime Matter

One premise is that the singular continuous body susceptible to imaginary division is capable of being broken externally insofar as it is a body. The gist of the philosophers' proofs of this thesis is that the corporeal form is a singular nature in kind, due to the unity of its defining name with respect to all the elements of its singular members. However, its singular members are not different essentially insofar as they are corporeal forms, as will be seen upon contemplating its individual representatives and their relation to it. For then, either the corporeal form, which is essentially continuous and is extended in the three directions, insofar as it is a continuous genus of its individual members, or is a generic nature, which cannot be simply a genus. For it can be imagined to have existed as actualized through its own causes, which are corporeal without any real addition belonging to it and which cannot be conceived as a genus like the measure. For it does not need in itself any of its differentia so as to be an actual entity.

The old master (Avicenna) states in his *Shifā'* that the nature of the form of corporeity in itself, insofar as it is the form of corporeity, is not open to question. For it is a singular and simple nature which cannot be diversified by means of differentiae added to it insofar as it is corporeity. For, then those would be differentiae added to it externally.

The explanation of that point is that if one corporeity differs from another corporeity, that would be due to the fact of being hot and not cold, or has an earthly nature which is watery. However, this is different from the principle which is in itself something definite, unless it is diversified as a line, a plane or a mathematical body, or is similar to a number which is not a given entity unless it is diversified as two, three or four. And even when diversified, that would not be due to adding anything to it from outside so that the generic nature, such as quantity or number is subsumed under a concrete or specific nature to which another differentiated nature is added. Instead the nature of duality itself would then be the same as the number predicated of it and length itself would be the measure predicated of it or pertaining to it.

Here, however, the matter is different. For if another form is added to corporeity, that form would not be a differentia of corporeity, but rather corporeity would be an

entity actualized in itself. For by corporeity we mean here that which is analogous to form, not to genus. Avicenna then adds: 'As for the corporeity we are talking about, it is in itself an actualized nature. The actualization of its specificity is not due to something added to it, even if we were to imagine that any notion is added to corporeity, but is rather a corporeity which cannot be actualized in itself except as matter or continuity.

'Similarly, if we add to continuity anything, that would not be due to the fact that continuity is not understood by us except through an addition thereto, but rather through other arguments which would show that continuity cannot actually exist alone; nor due to the fact that a thing does not exist actually so long as its nature does not exist. Thus, white or black is actualized naturally to the extent that its nature is actualized fully as its essence, and then it cannot exist actually except in matter.' (End of his words)

Since sound common sense is a judge, as the Master (Avicenna) mentioned and since that is sufficient to judge that the corporeal form is generically one, he was content with that without further ado. Moreover, since corporeal extension (I mean the corporeal form) is a generic nature common to bodies, that nature, insofar as it does not deter its dissolution, or else its disintegration, has multiple members. For the multiplicity of its members requires that disintegration attaches to it, because with respect to some of its members, it is disintegrated, whereas with respect to the rest, it is separable. That incidence is not excluded through the occurrence of something pertaining to it as it is. Otherwise the plurality of individuals will not occur, as already mentioned. However, if a deterrent is supposed to exist, it would be external and incidental to it and then the incidence of its disintegration would arise, due to its common generic nature. This is another premise which is needed to affirm the existence of prime matter, which demonstration requires two other proofs.

The first proof is that the corporeal form of the hypothetical part of the singular body conforms to the corporeal form pertaining to that body as part of generic essences, so that what happens to one of the two could happen to the other and thus it is possible for the one part to separate from the other part, just as any body can separate from all other bodies. For the corporeal form is liable to disintegration.

The second proof amounts to saying that the two corporeal forms pertaining to the two imaginary parts presumed to belong to a single body conform to the two corporeal forms pertaining to the two singular bodies, of which one is separate from the other with respect to its generic essence. It is then possible for the two aforementioned parts to be liable to that which is supposed to pertain to the two bodies in the form of external disintegration, due to their corporeal forms. It is also possible for the aforementioned bodies to be liable to what is supposed to pertain to the aforementioned parts in the form of external reparability.

It follows on the basis of those three propositions that both external continuity and separation could pertain to bodies, by virtue of these corporeal forms which

are generically united, regardless of whether those bodies agree with each other generically or not.

You may say that what accrues to the two separate individual bodies is their being separate since the beginning of creation, and therefore the same is possible with respect to the two continuous parts. For their two corporeal forms do not prevent them from being separate at the beginning of creation. Nor does it follow from this that disintegration may apply to two continuous parts after being created as a single entity. However, were the two separate entities to form a single continuous entity, which is then subject to separation, whereby it becomes two things, then separation may be said to be possible due to the possibility of the separation of the two continuous entities, without that being certain. Then the view of Democritus will not be repudiated through the third assertion or any of the three assertions. For he can say why the nature of the corporeal form cannot be said to be due to the separation supervening upon it, following the act of creation, and does not arise from it and from multiplicity as it existed at the beginning of creation as multiplicity, just as the nature of man, for instance, does not arise from one man separating into two men nor from multiplicity at the beginning of creation?

To refute this requires proof. I say that the nature of corporeal form is realized in all parts of hypothetical bodies, contrary to the nature of humanity, which is not realized in the hypothetical parts of man. That is why a man is not divisible into two men, neither in point of imaginary division, nor of actual division. This example and its likes do not conform to what we are asserting, to the effect that imagining all the hypothetical parts of the body which share in the generic essences admits of disintegration accruing to it.

Similarly the statement of one who says that the nature of man does not arise from multiplicity at the beginning of creation admits of two interpretations. If he means by that that man's nature does not derive from the supposition that the single man is at the beginning of creation then equivalent to two men, then the falsity of that supposition is self-evident. If, however, he means that the nature of man does not derive from the fact that that from which one man was created consisted of two men at the beginning of creation. This, however, does not entail the contrary of the desired proof in this respect. For it follows according to this illustration that the nature of corporeal form does not arise from the fact that that from which the single, continuous body consisted of separate bodies at the beginning of creation. It follows instead that there is in the single body something which could be supposed to be a single continuous body at the beginning of creation and two continuous bodies existing in it. This is the point which confirms it and is actually prime matter.

If he means that human nature does not exclude that, namely, instead of one man, two men might exist independently of that one man, then from the above-mentioned analogy, it follows that it does not belong to the nature of corporeal extension to exclude the fact that instead of one body two other bodies might

exist neither of which is connected with the other. This is incontrovertible and is unrelated to what we are trying to prove. What is actually intended by the above-mentioned proofs is the possibility of the dissociation of the two parts assumed with respect to the single body, by reason of their two corporeal forms conforming to the two corporeal forms pertaining to the two separate bodies. That possibility is independent of the beginning of creation, due to the fact that it is possible that instead of a single body at the beginning of creation two different bodies might have existed which were unrelated to that body except by being other than it and without there being between the two a common part which is the single body.

In short, the crux of the refutation of the above-mentioned statement consists of the fact that the above proofs show that the dissociation of the two supposedly continuous parts of the single body is analogous to the dissociation of the body belonging to the two separate parts. Were this dissociation to arise after creation, then that dissociation would be possible also after creation. Thus if the dissociation of two separate bodies is possible at the beginning of creation, then it is equally possible to occur to the two supposed parts. This is sufficient to prove the reality of prime matter, as already mentioned, and will be explained later, God willing.

Similarly, the possibility of the dissociation of the above-mentioned two parts at the beginning of creation entails that it is possible after creation, due to the nature of their corporeal forms, regardless of the concomitant contingencies which are necessary concomitants of nature as such, as the fair-minded will recognize with the slightest reflection.

II. Proofs Affirming Prime Matter

Following the above-mentioned premises, we might say that the philosophers have advanced in support of the affirmation of prime matter two substantive proofs. The first is popularly known and is the one which the Master (Avicenna) referred to in *al-Shifā'* where he states: 'We say first that we are assured that corporeity as such does not exclude divisibility. For it is of the nature of corporeity to be divisible. From this it appears that the form of the body and its dimensions subsist in something real. For those dimensions amount to the continuities themselves or to something which affects continuity, as will be shown later, rather than things which are subjects to continuity. For the term dimensions is a term which indicates continuous quantities as such, rather than things to which continuity adheres, the thing which is identified with continuity or the continuous in itself. Therefore, it is impossible for it to remain as it is, once discontinuity arises. For discontinuity is a form of multiplicity which once it ceases, multiplicity ceases, and then we have two dimensions. The same would be true of continuity in the sense of differentiation rather than accident, were it to arise, as we have shown elsewhere. For then one dimension would have occurred while each one of them ceases as pertains to

its specificity. Therefore, there inheres in bodies something which is the subject of continuity and discontinuity, as well as what belongs to the continuity of definite quantities.' (End of his words)

By the form of the body, he meant:

(1) The corporeal form which is essentially extended in three directions absolutely, while by the dimensions, he meant the mathematical body. It has been shown earlier that it is either the same as the corporeal form which defines its extensions, or their measure, which consists in its being estimated as thus or thus, as has been said. Those dimensions are then the same as the continuities themselves, according to the first sense, or something which attaches to continuity in the second sense. That is why he says that those dimensions are identical with the continuities themselves in the first sense, or something which attaches to continuity in the second sense.

(2) This is why he adds that these dimensions are identical with the sense of differentia rather than that of accident.

By continuity or the thing which is continuity itself or the continuous itself, he meant the corporeal form without reference to its dimensions, and by the continuous in itself the corporeal form together with its definite dimensions that is the mathematical body in the first above-mentioned sense.

He also meant by his words 'I mean continuity in the sense of the differentiation' that continuity is what determines the body and this is something that should not be ignored. That is what the most reliable commentator of *al-Ishārāt*¹ says: 'You should know that it is most important in this context to know that continuity and discontinuity cannot be two successive accidents supervening upon something which is their subject, namely, the body, as has occurred to the minds of those who doubt the existence of matter in an illusory way. For that thing ought to be in itself neither continuous nor discontinuous so as to be a subject of connection or disconnection, since it cannot be supposed to have any dimensions and thus will not be body at all but is rather something called matter. It is necessary for something to be continuous in itself to become body, that thing being the form and the sum-total or the body which is continuous in itself and is capable of disconnection. Those who make the continuous an accident absolutely confirm the body's continuity as an essential property constituting the body and that substance cannot be constituted by accidents.'

I say these are faultless words. The account of continuity in the sense of the continuous in itself which is extended in the three directions is absolutely essential to body. This is how you have learnt the falsity of what the commentator of *Hikmat al-'ayn*² has said; namely, that what some scholars have said in commenting to the effect that their subject must be neither continuous nor discontinuous in itself. For one can object that if he means that the subject of continuity and discontinuity must

1. This commentator is not named.

2. The commentator is not mentioned in the text but may be Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥilli.

be in itself neither continuous nor discontinuous, one would object that, if by the subject of continuity and discontinuity is to be rid of them both, that is not the case according to them. For prime matter cannot be devoid of continuity, although it is the subject of both of them. If, however, by the subject of continuity or discontinuity is meant that it cannot have any part of continuity or discontinuity essential to it, that would be excluded. For we do not grant that either of them is essential to it, that is, the body and is constitutive thereof so as not to be a subject thereof. For it does not follow from the fact that the body is discontinuous in itself that continuity is essential to it, since it is possible that both of them could be accidental to it. Is not that the subject of discourse? If he means something else, it is necessary first to convey his conception of it.

I say that this question cannot be dismissed simply by what the Master of Scholars [Avicenna] has stated in his glosses on the aforementioned comment with a view to refuting it, as follows, 'You have seen clearly that this question has no validity. For the continuous substance in itself is the body in the clearest terms, and the question is whether there is anything else or whether it alone is really the body as such. How then can it be said that continuity, or substantial extension is an accident of the absolute body? This is what some have said in explaining this point.'

For his statement that the essentially continuous substance is clearly the body is not excluded. How could that be the case when asserting its continuity depends on repudiating the part and its like, whereas asserting that continuity is essential depends on asserting the properties of the essential in it, as has clearly been shown?

From this follows the falsity of the question of the opponent as to how can it be said that substantial extension is an accident of the body. For the objector simply states that continuity, or extension, is an accident, while he repudiates substantial extension. You do not ignore the intent of the questioner, although the question is whether there is anything else or that alone is the reality of the body as such. For, the controversy over the body's composition of matter and form, as the First Master [Aristotle] teaches, has arisen from the controversy regarding the extension of the body and whether it is essential or accidental. That is why the opponent contends: 'Is not the controversy confined to that, while the exclusion is simply additional, as appears clearly?' However, the above-mentioned objection cannot be rebutted except by saying that the intent of the Greatest Scholar in stating that that thing which is the subject of continuity or discontinuity must be in itself neither continuous nor discontinuous, and this amounts to the second meaning; namely, that no part of continuity or discontinuity belongs to it. As for the words of the objector that we do not grant that either of them is essential to it, that is the body, they can be rebutted by saying that predicating the essential accident of the continuity of the body, as has been shown, proves that continuity is essential to body.

The Foremost Commentator has referred to that in these words: 'The subject of continuity and discontinuity, which is not in itself continuous, is not in itself such

that dimensions are supposed to belong to it.' Thus, it is never a body, and having indicated its essential property, removing the predicate of an entity amounts to removing the essential properties, which belong to it essentially, as has often been mentioned. That is why he says it cannot be a body at all, indicating by his reference to that property that continuity is essential to the body. For positing dimensions cannot be conceived without continuity, as has been mentioned earlier. The opponent has overlooked that. What should not be overlooked in this context is what the Foremost Commentator has said in his commentary on *al-Ishārāt*, to the effect that it ought also to be known that individual unity and the plurality corresponding to it do not apply to matter except after its individuation, which is derived from the form, so as to determine the modes of similarity derived from matter being qualified as one or multiple, as the venerable Commentator and others have said.

For it follows from their statements that, were the plurality of corporeality subsequently to its unity to require its non-being and its need for matter existing in both cases, the plurality of matter due to its separability following its unity would then require the annihilation of the first matter and requiring a second matter and so on ad infinitum. That is due to the fact that matter which exists in both states is not qualified in itself as one or many. It is only so qualified following the succession of forms.

If it is said that the Commentator has declared in the above-mentioned commentary that the individuation of forms is due to determinate prime matter, insofar as it is capable of individuation, considering that the individuation of prime matter depends on absolute form as the agent of that individuation, then the vicious circle would be avoided, and the consequence would be unavoidable that the prime matter of the elements, for instance, is individuated through that individuation which it does not derive from the individuation of the form. Moreover, there is no doubt that that individuation continues so long as the body exists in the state of continuity or discontinuity. It necessarily has a mode of unity which is continuous in the manner of the continuity of individuation and existence. That is why the Master (Avicenna) has declared in *al-Shifā'* that it is numerically one and Bahmanyār has declared in *al-Taḥṣīl* that it is individually one. How then can the statement of the Commentator to the effect that the matter which exists in both states is not in itself either one or multiple be sound?

I say that what is meant by this unity and multiplicity is continuous unity and the multiplicity corresponding to it, and these are the unity and multiplicity which apply to matter following its individuation which is derived from the absolute form, as he mentioned earlier. The truth is that prime matter possesses unity with respect to its essence which is constant in both states of continuity and discontinuity as well as permanent individuation and existence. Nevertheless, it is sometimes subject to continuous unity in the state of continuity subsequent to the single corporeal form inhering in it. However, it is liable sometimes to plurality accidentally in the state

of discontinuity. It has therefore a certain unity which is continuous by reason of itself as well as a unity and plurality which apply to it accidentally by reason of the succession of forms.

Further clarification will follow upon the exact determination of the above-mentioned question and the explicit arguments and their confirmation, if God wishes. If it is said that it does not follow from the above-mentioned proof drawn from the Master [Avicenna] that there must remain after the dissolution of the singular body a substance within the body which could be the substratum of the corporeal form, as appears clearly, I would reply that that something of the identity of the singular body might remain is clear. For if nothing were left upon its disintegration, its total annihilation would follow, which is absurd. Drawing attention to this will follow, God willing.

As for this second matter being a substance, it is also obvious, due to the truth of the fact that the duration of the accident entails the duration of the substance which is its subject. This will entail the duration of the substance regardless of whether an accident endured with it or not, as required. As for its being included in the body, that follows from what has previously been said in defining the body. This will be explained later.

As for its being the locus of the corporeal form, the Master [Avicenna] has given in his *Kitāb al-Najāt* in proving it two arguments; one in short is that the two substances have become such that none of them can be assumed to be free of part of substance; that is, they are in reality one. If one of them ceases to exist while the other endures, the remaining substance would necessarily be the locus of the extinct substance, for what remains is the locus of its cessation and of the emergence of the contingent substance of its kind and is their locus.

The second argument is that the corporeal form is that which qualifies the remaining substance, so that the qualified would necessarily be the locus of the qualifier. The significance of its two qualifiers will come later, God willing!

One of the propositions which help in the grasping of the current discussions is that no accidental continuity exists externally, nor that of accidental extension. They are simply two conceptual matters, which denote extension and continuity, while external existence is simply the equivalent of saying continuous and extended. For continuity is not something whereby the continuous is continuous, but is simply the continuity of the object, whether it is essential continuity or the continuity of the object which is continuous by virtue of its relation to the essentially continuous. This is similar to the fact that existence is not something which depends on the existence of the object, but rather it is existent by virtue of the thing existing, regardless of whether that referred to the existent or that of essence in relation to the existent. That premise will be explained later, God willing!

For another reason, external separation of the singular body which is one and continuous is not the same as the separation of the parts presumed to be in it and

separating them from it, because there are no diverse parts in the body susceptible to continuity. Otherwise, their numbers are either finite or infinite, while on the second assumption, the amount resulting there from would be infinite in value, whereas on the first, division must stop at their number. Both assumptions are void.

For a third reason, there is in the singular body one substantial continuous entity; that is, not two continuous entities, one substantial and one accidental, as already mentioned. Additional clarification will follow, God willing!

There is also the argument that the subdivision of the singular into two parts is not a total annihilation thereof or reducing them to two different bodies. This may be inferred from saying that we see externally a difference between the body's separation and its annihilation, on the one hand, and the annihilation of the two bodies, on the other. Now, were the separation of the body and the conjunction of the two bodies a matter of total annihilation, things would not be the same.

Similarly, if separation were equivalent to total annihilation, then separating the water in the jar into water in the jug would amount to annihilating it and eliminating all its parts, rather than eliminating one part and retaining another. Then the relation of the parts in the jugs to that quantity of water in the jar would be similar to all the parts of water not found in that jar. This conclusion is false and so is the premise.

It is clear that by the aforementioned annihilation in the first argument; that is, the statement of the opponent that there is a distinction between the separation of the body and its annihilation, on the one hand, and the annihilation of the two bodies and their conjunction, on the other, amount to total annihilation whereby nothing of the continuous feature would remain. Spotting the aforementioned differentiation means that we find that the body, in both states of its separation and conjunction remains in itself the same in those respects in which it existed prior to separation and conjunction, contrary to the condition of total annihilation.

Moreover, following further investigation, it appears that what remains in the two states of separation and conjunction is the original entity without reference to its continuous plurality or unity. This would rebut what was said in the first argument to the effect that in annihilation we find a difference between the separation of the body and its annihilation and between the annihilation of the two bodies and their conjunction as simple annihilation. If that refers to the annihilation of a single part of the body, we would not grant the aforementioned differentiation and that will not suit the opponent.

If, however, by that is meant total annihilation in the sense of the body being annihilated without any of its parts being left, we will not grant that differentiation. If, however, by that is meant the total annihilation, in the sense of the body not being separated into two parts which were presupposed before the separation, but that it has ceased to exist totally, the distinction would be granted. Nevertheless, it will not help, since what is meant by annihilation according to the opponent is that

the body upon separation is not annihilated totally in the first sense. The reason is that what is meant by that annihilation is total annihilation whereby no part of the body will remain, regardless of whether that was the hypothetical or real part. Moreover, it will appear upon investigation that what remains upon the incidence of separation or conjunction is only one entity which is numerically one, regardless of the multiplicity of its forms. Then the remaining hypothetical parts will not remain upon separation the same as they were before, since before it they existed in unity without multiplicity from outside, but have become multiplied externally thereafter and exist in the form of contingent existents. This should be sufficient to show the intent as will be further explained shortly, God willing!

It has been said about the second proof that the stability of the second part in both the states of separation and conjunction does not nullify that equality, due to the existence of that part itself in all parts of water that were not in that jar. For the prime matter of the elements is the same for all. Moreover, the two bodies arising upon separation were two parts hypothetically presupposed on the occasion of conjunction which belonged to the jar, contrary to the rest which were not in the jar. Similarly the ratio of the water in the jug to the water in the jar would be the same as its ratio to the rest of the water which did not exist in the jar.

This can be rebutted by saying that the body which remains as the singular body which is the water in the jar, for instance, is not realized in both states of separation and conjunction in itself individually in all parts of the water which were not in that jar necessarily. Nor would it follow from the fact that the prime matter of all the elements is the same individually as the prime matter of every part of that total is the same as the matter of another part as well as that of the whole. For if by the statement that the prime matter of the elements is the same according to them, the speaker can only mean that prime matter consists of the totality of elements, as a totality, and is individually a single thing. However, it does not follow from that statement that the prime matter of every part of the sum-total is realized as such in every one of its parts.

If, however, the intent is that the prime matter of each part of the totality of elements is in itself the same as the prime matter of the remaining parts and of the totality, that point will not be questioned. For to each part of the diverse elements of the prime matter of the remaining parts which are distinct in position and are separate each one from the other, there is a reality which is different from that of the remaining parts, as well as the reality of the prime matter of the sum-total of the elements, although they all share in one essential property.

In short, it might be said that the reality of the matter which is formed by the same prime material form which exists in the jar upon its separation will be formed by the many forms which exist in the jugs and becomes the cause of the correlation of the water in the jar. But since the parts of the matter were not fulfilled in relation to the waters which were not in the jar, it follows that

the ratio of those parts to the part in the jar is the same as the ratio of the parts which occur in the jugs.

Similarly, the assumption that the two parts which are supposed to continue to exist in the mind, upon the occurrence of the condition of separation, is clearly false. For it cannot be assumed that the two bodies arising from separation were two hypothetical parts during conjunction; because the two parts which are supposed to exist during the state of conjunction do not exist externally and the two bodies which come into existence upon separation have two distinct existences externally. A further clarification of this matter will follow, God willing!

The Master of the Commentators¹ has spoken to the effect that the statement that the prime matter of the elements is individually one according to them, does not conform to their view. For, prime matter, according to them, is something potentially ambiguous and becomes determinate as one or many by reason of the form which inheres in it; since were it individually one it would be fit to be one individual now and two individuals later. We would then ask what is the purpose of positing it?

That calls for reflection. For, if by something ambiguous, he means that prime matter is ambiguous in itself, that would not correspond to their view. For, they have declared that its essence remains the same despite the succession of forms upon it, since its essence has an objective mode of existence which remains unchanged despite the succession of forms. Why not, since the indefinite form grows, so long as it remains indefinite and does not exist externally, according to the agreed opinion of scholars? For everything which exists in some form of continuous existence while its forms are in succession, has a real unity independent of those forms. That is its individual reality would not be derived from those successive forms. Otherwise, it would not remain the same upon their succession. That is why the Master of Commentators has stated in his commentary on *al-Ishārāt* [of Avicenna], that the individuation of prime matter arises from the permanence of its nature despite the alteration of its external forms. If, however, he means that its form is indefinite, that will not contradict its being individuated by virtue of its permanent and continuous reality and thereby retaining an essential reality, and is manifested in accidental realities consequent upon the incidence of the forms which are accidental forms of individuation, which do not affect the nature of its continuous existence. In general, the mode of existence does not depend on individuation. Therefore, its existence is perpetual and does not depend on the accidents. This is obvious! If by his statement 'potentially', he means that prime matter is in potentiality in relation to acquiring the forms which inhere in it, that is excluded, since it does not entail that it cannot be individuated in itself.

If, however, he means that it is potentially a substance and has potentially no reality, other than the potentiality of separation and conjunction, that would be

1. al-Qāḍī Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī.

patently false. For its substantiality is real and its continuous existence by virtue of which it has the faculty of conjunction and separation is also real.

Similarly, (the Commentator's) statement that its determination and effectiveness depend on the form inherent in it is excluded, if he means by that its determinateness and the activity dependent on the forms inherent in it. But it does not follow from this that its nature is ambiguous or without any essential determination. But if he means by that its essential determinateness and effectiveness, which belong to it by virtue of its mode of continuous existence, we would not grant that those depend on the forms inherent in it. For the two endure despite the alteration of the forms inherent in it.

Similarly, if by unity and plurality, he means the continuous unity which entails the negation of plurality and its opposite, we will grant that those depend on the forms inherent in it. But it does not follow from that that it possesses an individual unity essentially; that is a unity corresponding to the negation of essential plurality. But if he means by essential unity a corollary of negating essential plurality and its opposite, we do grant that they depend on the forms inhering in it. For, the prime matter of all the elements is a single entity to which no plurality attaches. It acquires unity by virtue of its continuous existence in the two states of conjunction and separation as well as the states of multiple forms inhering in it. It is multiplied accidentally by virtue of the plurality of forms. Prime matter is then an individual entity in itself, and an ambiguous entity by virtue of the forms. That is why it is sometimes represented as a single entity, by virtue of continuity. Further clarification will follow, God willing!

Let us go back to the intended meaning and say that he claimed necessity with respect to the impossibility of total annihilation of the body in the event of its dispersion and note that the Commentator of *al-Tajrīd* chose that view in his summing up of the above-mentioned proof where he says: 'The crux of what they contended in proving prime matter after stripping it of all accretion, as well as common and allegorical terms, entails difficulties and ambiguities.' For the single body is the continuous substance in itself, which will entail that if separated, that continuous substance in itself would be annihilated; and since there are two substances which are continuous in themselves, there must exist something else which is common to the first continuous body and those two. In fact, that thing must remain the same in both states, or else definition of the body would amount to the total nullification of the body and the drawing of the two other bodies from the core of non-being. But logical necessity stipulates the impossibility of that result.

TREATISE ON THE BEWILDERMENT OF THE LEARNED:
THE LIAR'S PARADOX

Risālat 'ibrat al-fuḍalā': Jadhr al-aṣamm

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Shams al-Dīn Khafri, *Risālat 'ibrat al-fuḍalā': Jadhr al-aṣamm*, ed. A. F. Qarāmalikī, *Khīrad Nāmāh-yi Šadrā*, 1/4 (Tehran, 1375 Sh./1996), pp. 86–89.

al-Dawānī's Solution of this Paradox

His honour, the bearer of Muḥammadan majesty, al-Dawānī, may his words be glorified, has responded to this paragraph as follows:

The statement of one who argues that 'all my words at this moment are lies' will be either true or false, depending on whether it is a statement of fact or not. However, this is not the case. For, the truth of a given statement consists in reporting the objective relation either in a corresponding manner, whereupon it would be true; or in a contrary manner, whereupon it would be false. Then the report of the objective relation would be a negation, rather than a confirmation of the report. Moreover, the words of the one who says, 'All my words at this moment are lies', if they indicate a reference to those words themselves, then the relation which is its import will not be in reference to the objective relation actually, insofar as the speaker does not refer in them to the same real objective fact. (End of his words)

Critique of al-Dawānī's Response

I say, first, there is no doubt that the statement of one who says, 'All my words at this moment are lies', is susceptible of truth or falsity, depending on its referential character. For whatever is susceptible of truth or falsity, depending on its referential character, is a statement of fact.

Second, it is clear that this statement is an instance of the parts of its objective subject-matters, which has a relation to lying necessarily in itself, either in point of generation or its opposite. Thus the intent of this statement would consist in reporting that objective relation; and then the statement of this respondent, if considered as an allusion to those very words, would not be identical with that relation which is its connotation, or a report of an objective relation, and therefore is not an indication of something objective.

Thirdly, if, in affirming this paradox, the speaker is assumed to describe what he is saying at the moment as a lie, rather than initiating falsehood, then that response would absolutely fall to the ground.

If it is said that, since the essence of a statement is the assimilation of a matter of fact, and the assimilation of a thing to itself is irrational, then it follows that, that cannot be supposed to be the intent of the speaker, as far as the words are concerned.

I say that a statement is actually an assimilation of an actual fact in the three periods of time. Thus, the statement in the preceding words is in fact an assimilation of a factual matter at that moment in which those words were uttered. Therefore, it is an assimilation of itself, because it occurred at that moment. Now the assimilation of a thing to itself is a sound concept, similar to saying that all my words at this moment are a report of an external fact or indicate my utterance or speech, but I did not intend that in another statement at that moment. For that statement in itself is similar to a thing corresponding to itself, which is perfectly sound.

Fourthly, from this example, namely the words of the speaker who says all my words at this moment are a statement of fact, the falsity of the above-mentioned response is revealed. For, it is actually a statement of fact, although its individual subject is confined to itself. Now, just as that confinement does not entail that it is not a statement of fact necessarily, the external confinement of the individual subject of the words of the speaker who says, 'All my words at this moment are lies', does not exclude its being a statement of fact.

al-Khafri's Responses

This is what was given in the form of responses aimed at solving that paradox. However, one should rather say with respect to its solution what follows:

First response

This proposition has two aspects, one that it is a report and the other that it is the object of a report, and is in the first respect such that lying is negated of it in the second respect, so that the two contradictories or truth and falsity do not co-exist here. For, there is no approximation of lying to the negation of lying in one respect, which is the concurrence of two contradictories.

This calls for more reflection and is referable to the reader of this epistle. If you wish to listen to the highest response, then listen to what I say.

Second response

The second response is that judging the aforementioned matter turns on itself, insofar as it refers to itself. The crux is that this statement is false insofar as it is an instance of its subject-matter. The falsity of this conclusion consists in negating its falsehood insofar as it is an instance of its subject-matter. However, this provision, namely that it is an instance of its subject-matter, is a restriction of the negation, I mean falsehood, rather than that of the negation itself. Therefore, it does not

follow from its falsehood the negation of its falsehood, whereby two contradictories would co-exist.

The gist of this response is that this statement, considered as self-assertion, is false, but not insofar as it is so described. For insofar as it is an object of assertion, it has been deemed false, although in that respect it is neither true nor false. It is deemed false only insofar as it is a report and that falsity entails that falsity attaches to it insofar as it is a negated instance of its subject-matter. But that negation does not entail negating its falsity, but rather that falsity attaches to it insofar as it is a reference to itself being an object of that reporting.

If this response is well-received by scholars, then it is worthy of being regarded as the goal of the virtuous. However, if you wish to hear a subtler response, then listen to what I say.

Third response

The third response is that the meaning of the falsehood consists in the fact that words do not correspond to the thing itself; that is, without regard to the judgment of reason, and then that correspondence is asserted. Therefore, the gist of the statement of the speaker who asserts that 'all my words at this moment are false' is that these words do not correspond to the thing itself; that is, without regard to the judgment of reason that it is false, although it should correspond to that judgment. But if that is negated, then that statement is false, its falsity consisting in the judgment of reason that it is false, that affirmation consisting in the statement understood to refer to the negated affirmation, rather than a limitation of that negation. It is clear that the falsity of this statement consists in negating the judgment of reason with respect to it.

The crux of this response is that the statement is judged to be false by virtue of asserting it to be false, but not with respect to the judgment of reason. This assertion will be false by virtue of falsity being predicated of it, and by the virtue of the judgment of reason being negated with respect to the negation of that total; I mean the total assertion of falsity, which is not a matter of the judgment of reason. That judgment will be false by virtue of falsity belonging to it, rather than with respect to the judgment of reason, or negating falsity of it.

If this response is acceptable to learned scholars, it would be worthy of being called the message of virtuous scholars.

End of the Khafrī epistle, with the help of God, the generous Lord.

Part II

The School of Isfahan

Introduction

Until the middle of the twentieth century the term ‘School of Isfahan’ was completely unknown in works on Islamic thought composed in European and even Islamic languages, except for some oblique references to it in some Persian sources. Now, some half a century later, it has become a widely-used term not only in works of Islamic philosophy, but also in more general writings concerned with Islamic and especially Safavid history. This transformation is due most of all to the decision of Henry Corbin and myself to use and propagate this term to designate philosophy in the Safavid period. During this period there was a major revival of Islamic philosophy. This was long after Ibn Rushd, with whom, until recently, scholars in the West, the Arab world and other Islamic countries, with the exception of Persia and the Muslim part of the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent, considered the creative period of Islamic philosophy to have come to an end. Corbin and I sought to present and make known a whole continent of Islamic philosophy, undiscovered as far as the general public was concerned, a continent whose central province was what we chose to call the School of Isfahan. We chose this term not because there were no other places in Persia where philosophy was cultivated in the period under consideration, but because Isfahan, the Safavid capital, was the main focal point of the major philosophical renaissance of the tenth/sixteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth centuries.

Our efforts in this domain influenced not only numerous scholars in the West and Islamic countries outside of Persia, but also scholars in Persia itself especially in university circles where, when we began to write of the School of Isfahan, there was not much knowledge of activity in the field of Islamic philosophy that was being carried out in *madrasahs* and private circles in Tehran, Qom and elsewhere. The result of all our efforts, which were joined early by other eminent scholars and philosophers such as Toshihiko Izutsu and Mehdi Mohaghegh working mostly together and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, has been the editing and studying of numerous texts written by members of the School of Isfahan, as well as the School

of Tehran which was to follow it, as well as the translation of many of these texts primarily into French and English but also occasionally into other European languages. This activity has also led to the translation of many Arabic texts of the Safavid period into Persian with the present-day educated Iranian public in mind. Now that we have greater, although still not complete, knowledge of the philosophical landscape of the School of Isfahan, it has become clear how really significant the philosophical activity of this School is. One can now claim with certitude that the philosophical works of the Safavid period are as outstanding within the context of the Islamic intellectual tradition as are Safavid architecture, tile work, miniature painting, carpet and cloth weaving and so many other arts in the tradition of Islamic art taken as a whole.

One might ask what the conditions were that permitted the flowering of such major currents of philosophy from the tenth/sixteenth to the twelfth/eighteenth centuries, currents that we have identified as the School of Isfahan. To answer this we have to turn to the establishment of Safavid rule in Persia and the promulgation of Twelver Shi'ism as the state religion at that time. To make possible the turning of Persia into a Shi'i country, the Safavid rulers invited to their newly-founded empire many outstanding Shi'i 'ulamā', who were Arabs mostly from Jabal 'Āmil, Bahrayn or Hillah and other Iraqi cities. These men were primarily masters of the transmitted sciences (*al-'ulūm al-naqliyyah*) such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and its principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), Qur'ānic studies and the Shi'i sciences of *ḥadīth* and *kalām* and not of the intellectual sciences (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*) at whose heart stands philosophy (*falsafah* and *ḥikmat*). They thus created an ambience for religious studies which was not necessarily favourable to philosophy and in fact during the early Safavid period many Shi'i 'ulamā' opposed *falsafah*. And yet, because Shi'i religious thought is more open to the role of the intellect or *al-'aql* in the religious sciences than is Ash'arism, the prevalent Sunni *kalām* which, as we have discussed earlier in this *Anthology*, has been in general anti-*falsafah*, Shi'i religious thought provided a more congenial ambience for the cultivation of philosophy than what existed in the Sunni parts of the Islamic world, especially in Arab countries. After all, the creation of this new Shi'i ambience brought to the centre of the intellectual stage the thought of such figures as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī who were not only central authorities in Shi'i *kalām* but also philosophers, not to speak of the works of the Shi'i thinkers of the School of Shiraz.

The establishment of the city of Isfahan as the Safavid capital is itself also of significance in the genesis of the School of Isfahan. This city had been a major centre for the study of Islamic philosophy for many centuries before becoming the capital of a major new empire. Such major philosophers as Suhrawardī and Ṭūsī had been associated with it. Ibn Sinā had taught philosophy there for nine years and the building in which he taught still stands in the old Dardasht quarter of the city. Also during the period when the School of Shiraz was the central locus of

philosophical activity in Persia, Isfahan had continued to be also a notable centre producing such major philosophers as Ibn Turkah Iṣfahānī.

While preserving this long intellectual heritage, Isfahan gained new intellectual pre-eminence by becoming, as capital, a major cosmopolitan city where people lived who knew different languages and where there was a notable flow of ideas from both east and west. That is what made possible the appearance of philosophers in Isfahan who wrote not only about Islamic philosophy but also addressed themselves to philosophical ideas emanating from lands as far apart as Christian Europe and Hindu India. Some of the earliest works on comparative philosophy and theology in the history of thought in general and certainly in Islamic thought in particular belong to the School of Isfahan.

Moreover, the heritage of Sufism was very much alive in Isfahan and in its aspect of gnosis or *'irfān* exercised much influence upon the School of Isfahan despite the opposition by many *'ulamā'* to Sufism especially during the later history of the Safavid period. In Safavid Isfahan a seeker after knowledge could have access to the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī and his School as well as to the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*), to Ibn Sīnan Peripatetic or *mashshā'i* philosophy as well as both Sunni and Shi'i *kalām*, not to speak of the synthesis of these various schools made during earlier centuries in Shiraz, Isfahan itself and elsewhere. Furthermore, gnosis in its particularly Shi'i form or what in Persian is called *'irfān-i shī'i* became more available than before although it had of course existed before the Safavid period, going back as it does to the esoteric teachings of the Prophet and the Shi'i Imams and having the same ultimate origin as Sufism.

All that has been said concerns the external conditions which together helped to create an ambience favourable to the rise and flowering of the School of Isfahan, but philosophy is created by philosophers and not a particular cultural and intellectual milieu, which of course nevertheless exercises influence upon individual thinkers. In the case of the School of Isfahan the two philosophers most responsible for its creation and pre-eminence are Mīr Dāmād and Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī or Mullā Ṣadrā, who was his student. Mīr Dāmād is without doubt the founder of this School, a major thinker who established a philosophical school of his own known as *al-ḥikmah al-yamāniyyah* or 'Yamānī theosophy/philosophy' (Yamānī here referring to both *īmān* or faith and the symbolism of the right hand and being contrasted to Yūnānī or Greek). In addition he trained numerous students who made the full flowering of this School possible. The most significant member of the School is Mullā Ṣadrā who founded a major new school of Islamic philosophy which he called *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*, the 'transcendent theosophy/philosophy', on the basis of a grand synthesis of the earlier school of Islamic philosophy and the various epistemological methods for the attainment of philosophical knowledge, methods ranging from gnosis, intellection and illumination to ratiocination to drawing from the inner verities of revelation.

Although Mullā Ṣadrā's teachings came to dominate the philosophical scene and have remained the most influential Islamic philosophical teachings in Persia as well as Muslim India and Pakistan to this day, his *al-ḥikmah al-muta'aliyah* was not the only philosophical perspective to flourish in the School of Isfahan. One finds for example a more Ibn Sīnā approach in the works of another major figure of this school, Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī. In preparing an anthology of philosophy since Mīr Dāmād in seven volumes, Āshtiyānī and Corbin discovered so many pertinent philosophical texts of the School of Isfahan that they could not include them all in their voluminous *Anthology* which, as a result of the death of Corbin, was unfortunately never completed and terminated with volume four of the seven volumes originally planned.

The two presiding figures who, besides its founder Mīr Dāmād, dominated the beginning of the School of Isfahan in the tenth/sixteenth century were Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī, one of the great polymaths and many-sided geniuses of Islamic history, and one of the most enigmatic figures in the annals of Islamic philosophy, Mīr Abu'l-Qāsim Findiriskī. To discuss the richness of the School of Isfahan in its foundational phase, it is enough to point out that Mīr Dāmād was at once logician, philosopher, mystic, poet and jurisprudent. Al-'Āmilī was the *shaykh al-islām* of Isfahan, that is, the chief religious authority of the land, a well-known Sufi master, one of the great mathematicians of Islamic history, an architect and landscape designer, a master of the occult or hidden sciences (*al-'ulūm al-khaṭṭiyyah* or *al-gharībah*), and perhaps the greatest poet of the Persian language of the tenth/sixteenth century while also composing fine poetry in Arabic, which was his mother tongue. He was of course also a philosopher. Mīr Findiriskī was a master of Ibn Sīnā philosophy which he taught in Isfahan while writing the most important commentary composed by an Islamic philosopher on a Hindu philosophical and metaphysical text. He was also a practising alchemist and an accomplished poet while writing one of the most important texts in the Islamic philosophical tradition on the structure of society seen from a philosophical point of view. It was in such a rich intellectual ambience, impregnated also by Shī'i teachings at all levels, that Mullā Ṣadrā and other philosophers of the second generation of the School of Isfahan were trained.

This second generation included not only the most famous philosopher of this School, that is, Mullā Ṣadrā, but also Mullā Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī, who was a student of Mīr Findiriskī, and Mullā Shamsā Gilānī and Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī, both students of Mīr Dāmād. This generation was followed by the famous students of Mullā Ṣadrā, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī and then Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, student of both Rajab 'Alī Tabrizī and Fayḍ Kāshānī. There were also at this time many other philosophers of note such as Āqā Ḥusayn Khunsārī, Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwarī, Shaykh Ḥusayn Tunakābunī, Qawām al-Dīn Rāzī, Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Sabzawārī, Āqā Mirzā Ḥasan Lāhijī and Mullā Na'imā Ṭāliqānī along with a

number of others. Many of these figures are treated in the *Anthology* of Āshtiyānī and Corbin but because of the lack of space cannot be treated here.

The Afghan invasion of Isfahan marks the end of the school we have called the School of Isfahan although philosophical activity was revived in that city once the dust of the invasion settled. But there was also a tragic ending to this period. On the day of the invasion of the city one of the notable figures of the School of Isfahan, Faḍīl-i Hindī died and most of his works, along with those of many others, were destroyed by being thrown, according to contemporary accounts, into the Zāyandah Rūd, the river that runs through Isfahan. His contemporary Mullā Na'imā fled to Qom and Mullā Muḥammad Sādiq Ardistānī was exiled from Isfahan shortly before the invasion and also took refuge in the holy city of Qom which became a centre for the teaching of Islamic philosophy and has today again become a major centre for the teaching of this philosophy thanks to the efforts of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī during the Pahlavi period.

The philosophical scene of the School of Isfahan was very diversified and rich. In addition to the synthesis of Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā there were many other strands of philosophical thought that were cultivated in this School. There were some who continued the Ibn Sinan and Suhrawardian traditions. Others were more concerned with the philosophical dimensions of Ibn 'Arabian gnosis, and yet others with specifically Shi'ī gnosis (*'irfān-i shī'ī*) and more particularly with the philosophical significance of some of the traditions of the Shi'ī Imams, particularly the first, fifth, sixth and seventh Imams. Yet others were concerned with comparative philosophy and the history of philosophy as well as esoterism in general including the esoteric meaning of both the rites and doctrines of Islam itself such as the daily prayers and the pilgrimage (*hajj*) and eschatological doctrines.

If it were to be asked what the central philosophical concerns of this School were and what the main subjects were with which most of the philosophers of this School dealt, the answer would have to be the meaning of being (*wujūd*), its relation to quiddity (*māhiyyah*), the question of the principiality (*aṣālah*) of *wujūd* or *māhiyyah* and the ontological status of each, the meaning of the gradation of *wujūd*, the manner of attribution of *wujūd* to *māhiyyah* and many other issues pertaining to ontology and pure metaphysics including the central issue of causality. No other school of Islamic philosophy is as rich in these domains as the School of Isfahan.

In light of their general metaphysical and ontological teachings, many philosophers of this School were also concerned with cosmology, particularly the status of the world of imagination (*'ālam al-khayāl* or *'ālam al-mithāl*) and its role not only in cosmology, but also in eschatology, psychology and philosophical anthropology. These concerns led naturally to questions pertaining to the existentionation of the world (*hudūth*) in relation to eternity (*qidam* in this context) and the meaning of the elusive domain of time (*zamān*) in relation to both aeviternity (*dahr*) and

eternity (*sarmad*). As far as these complicated issues are concerned, diverse and often opposing views were expressed as we also see in the discussions of ontology. The magisterial treatment of these issues by Mullā Ṣadrā was central but they were not the only views accepted by the philosophers of the School of Isfahan, many of whom in fact explicitly rejected many of his theses.

The subject of epistemology was also of central concern at this time. What is the meaning of intellect (*‘aql*), what is the range of knowledge attainable through it and what is the relation between knowledge, the knower and the known? What is the role of illumination (*ishrāq*) and unveiling (*mukāshafah*) in the attainment of philosophical knowledge? What is the role of *waḥy* or revelation in gaining philosophical knowledge? And what about knowledge gained through the senses? These were questions to which many addressed themselves, especially Mullā Ṣadrā who dealt with these issues systematically and in great depth, seeking to bring about the integration of these various modes of knowing or what he called *al-burhān*, demonstration, *al-‘irfān*, unitive knowing or gnosis which includes *ishrāq*, and *al-Qur’ān*. Yet, this synthesis was not accepted by all the other philosophers of the School of Isfahan and profound debates about epistemology continued among them.

Already Ibn Sīnā had dealt with questions of eschatology as had Suhrawardī and certain other philosophers of the earlier periods. It is, however, in the School of Isfahan that we find the most extensive philosophical treatment of eschatological issues. The fourth ‘journey’ of the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā contains the most extensive and penetrating treatment of the science of the soul (*‘ilm al-nafs*) and eschatology in the annals of Islamic philosophy. But there were also many others who dealt with these subjects in various ways and concern with eschatological questions and the ultimate becoming of the soul are central in the School of Isfahan as they are in the School of Tehran.

There was certainly also interest in this School in the subject of substance and accidents (*al-jawāhir wa’l-a‘rāḍ*) and therefore what we can call ‘the philosophy of nature’. In the thesis of *al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*, that is, transubstantial motion, of Mullā Ṣadrā, a thesis rejected by some of the philosophers of the School of Isfahan, we find a most profound philosophy of nature. And yet, the philosophers of this School were not as much concerned with *ṭabī‘iyyāt*, the natural sciences, and *riyāḍiyyāt*, the mathematical sciences, as were such earlier philosophers as Ibn Sīnā and Ṭūsī. One cannot find in the School of Isfahan a work that deals with these subjects to the extent that Ibn Sīnā, Ṭūsī or Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī have, in some of their works such as the *Kitāb al-Shifā’* (The Book of Healing) or the *Durrat al-tāj* (Jewel of the Crown) of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, on parts of which Safavid philosophers wrote important commentaries. This phenomenon is surely related to the fact that the philosophers of the School of Isfahan were less interested in the natural and mathematical sciences themselves than were many of the earlier philosophers. None of the figures of this school, with the exception of Bahā’ al-Dīn ‘Āmilī, were

also notable scientists as were earlier figures such as Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī.

Another important concern of many philosophers of the School of Isfahan was the relation between philosophical thought and revelation, faith and reason, and the significance of the inner meaning of basic religious texts for philosophical inspiration and speculation. This concern is to be found especially in Mullā Ṣadrā but is hardly confined to him. Already, Ibn Sīnā had written a few commentaries on certain verses of the Qur'ān as had some later philosophers such as those of the School of Shiraz. But the most comprehensive philosophical commentary of the Qur'ān in Islamic history was produced in the School of Isfahan. This is the series of commentaries by Mullā Ṣadrā which, although not covering the whole of the Qur'ān, consists of seven large volumes in its most current edition. Mullā Ṣadrā also wrote a masterly commentary on the *Uṣūl al-kāfi* (Principles of the Book of Sufficiency) of Kulaynī which is the primary canonical collection of Shi'ī traditions (*aḥādīth*) of both the Prophet and the Shi'ī Imams. Such commentaries and philosophical interpretations of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, the latter understood in its Shi'ī sense to include both the prophetic (*nabawī*) and the Imam-related (*walawī*), can also be found among other members of the School of Isfahan such as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī.

This direct philosophical engagement with issues of a specifically religious nature as well as general philosophical issues were combined with the belief on the part of the Safavid philosophers that *al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah* (literally, Divine wisdom or theosophy) with which they were primarily concerned, should take the place in Islamic thought in general of *kalām* which most of them, such as Mullā Ṣadrā, opposed. As we had occasion to mention in a previous volume of this *Anthology* dealing with philosophical theology in Safavid and post-Safavid Shi'ism in Persia, philosophy, in the sense of *al-ḥikmah al-ilāhiyyah*, replaced *kalām* to a large extent, if not completely. The philosophers (*ḥukamā'*) of these periods deal with nearly every issue treated in theology in the sense of *kalām* but call their intellectual activity *ḥikmat* or *falsafah* and not *kalām*, there being some exceptions to whom we have referred in the earlier volume of this work.

When one looks upon the School of Isfahan as a whole, one is astounded not only by the diversity of philosophical perspectives within it, but also by the attempt of many of its leading figures to integrate the various intellectual perspectives of the Islamic tradition on the basis of efforts carried out in this domain by their predecessors. This attempt at synthesis during the Safavid period begins with Mīr Dāmād himself, who sought to integrate the Peripatetic teachings of Ibn Sīnā and Ṭūsī and the Illuminationist theses of Suhrawardī, and continues with his student Mullā Ṣadrā. This most eminent philosopher of the School of Isfahan sought to integrate all the major Islamic intellectual perspectives into one grand synthesis that he called *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*. His achievement in a sense crowns the efforts

of previous centuries made by Islamic philosophers in Persia, going back to Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and followed by several figures of the School of Shiraz, as well as a number of others, to unify various schools of thought that had developed over the centuries in Islamic civilization.

The influence of the School of Isfahan upon the later history of philosophy in Persia was immense and its heritage, especially the teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā, still dominate the philosophical scene in Iran today where there has been a veritable renaissance of the thought of this School and especially Mullā Ṣadrā since the middle of the fourteenth/twentieth century. As we mentioned earlier in this volume, the teachings of this school also played a major role in the development of Islamic philosophy in Muslim India and among the Shi'a of Iraq. As for other parts of the Islamic world, such as the Arab world (minus Iraq), Turkey and the Malay world, it was only in the fourteenth/twentieth century that scholars and philosophers in these lands were able to gain access to the teachings of this school. But now one sees the belated influence of such figures as Mullā Ṣadrā among certain thinkers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, the Arab world and of course Pakistan, Bangladesh and Muslim India, where familiarity with the works of the philosophers of the School of Isfahan goes back to the period preceding the British colonization of India.

Familiarity with the School of Isfahan in the West also dates from the second half of the fourteenth/twentieth century although there were a few studies by orientalists going back to the first half of that century. These works did not, however, gain a wide audience. But now that some half a century has passed since the appearance of the first works in European language by Corbin, myself and others on this subject, numerous studies have appeared and continue to appear on the various figures of the School of Isfahan, especially Mullā Ṣadrā and a number of important works belonging to this School as well as studies of these writings have been carried out in and or translated into French and English and occasionally German, Spanish, Bosnian, Albanian and some other European languages. Consequently, scholars of Islamic studies in the West have come to realize how significant the School of Isfahan is, not only for the intellectual history of Persia and Muslim India, but also for the whole of Islamic philosophy seen as an integral tradition. Furthermore, some thinkers in the West, especially in France, like a number of Muslim thinkers, have become interested in the innate philosophical significance of the ideas of such figures as Mullā Ṣadrā, who is the pole around which the revival of Islamic philosophy in Persia itself has turned during the past several decades.

Mīr Dāmād

Mīr Burhān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād al-Ḥusaynī al-Astarābādī (d. 1041/1631) was born in Astarābād near the city of Mashhad and died in Najaf, in today's Iraq. Known also by his penname *Ishrāq* (Illumination),¹ al-Mu'allim al-Thālith (Third Teacher—the first being Aristotle and the second Fārābī) and Sayyid al-Afāḍil (Master of the Learned),² he is considered to be the founder of the School of Isfahan and one of the most respected philosophers of the Safavid era.³ Mīr Dāmād was a follower of Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination as well as Ibn Sīnā's Peripatetic philosophy and studied with a number of traditional masters in Mashhad, where he mastered such texts as the *Shifā'* and *Ishārāt* of Ibn Sīnā. He continued his studies in Qazwin and Kashan, but it was in Isfahan where he spent most of his prolific life composing numerous works and training such students as Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī and Mullā Ṣadrā. Like many other Muslim philosophers of the School of Isfahan, he made an attempt to bring about a rapprochement between Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*), Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) and theological (*kalām*) schools of thought. He was concerned especially with the contentious issue of the createdness or eternity of the world and the meaning of time. His life-long engagement with the question of Being and time earned him the title 'the Philosopher of Time'.

Mīr Dāmād's magnum opus is *Qabasāt ḥaqq al-yaqīn fī ḥudūth al-'ālam* (Particles of Fire Concerning the Truth of Certainty about the Createdness of the World). His choice of the word *Qabasāt*, which means 'particles of fire', was based on the Qur'ānic verses 7:27 and 9:20. The treatise, one of the most difficult texts of Islamic philosophy, is primarily devoted to the question of time and its relationship to the eternity and createdness of the world. *Qabasāt* is divided into ten chapters,

1. Mīr Dāmād's pen name in his collected works of poetry is 'Ishrāq'.

2. Sayyid al-Afāḍil was a title bestowed on him by Ḥājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawāri.

3. His title 'Dāmād' meaning 'groom' in Persian is due to the fact that his father married the daughter of 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Alī also known as Muḥaqqiq-i Karakī. Therefore, Mīr Dāmād is the grandson of this notable figure.

each one called a *qabas*, and each *qabas* consists of smaller parts called *wamīd* (lightning). The choice of the title of this work as well as chapters and sections clearly indicate Mīr Dāmād's interest in Suhrawardī and the extent to which he had been influenced both by him and his school of *ishrāq*. In fact, the connection between Mīr Dāmād and Suhrawardī is made even more clear not only by the titles of many of the numerous works of Mīr Dāmād such as *Jadhawāt* (Sparks of Light), *Ufuq al-mubīn* (The Clear Horizon), and *Mashāriq al-anwār* (Orient of Light), but also by the fact that he is one of the few philosophers who accepted Suhrawardī's thesis of the principality of essence (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*). Other significant works of Mīr Dāmād include *Khalsat al-malakūt* (Heavenly Mystical States), *al-Khal'īyyāt* (Disassociations) and, of course, his mystical poetry which he wrote under the pen name *Ishrāq*.

Mīr Dāmād distinguished three ontologically distinct domains or divisions of existence consisting of *sarmad* (eternity), *dahr* (aeviternity) and *zamān* (ordinary time). He formulated the relationship between them as follows: 1) The relationship between the immutable and the immutable (*sarmad*); 2) The relationship between the immutable and the changing (*dahr*); 3) The relationship between the changeable and the changing (*zamān*).

Throughout the *Qabasāt*, Mīr Dāmād's extensive use of quotations from Ibn Sīnā's works on createdness and eternity indicate his extreme sensitivity to the great philosopher's views, and his attempts to offer solutions to questions raised by Ibn Sīnā. This close engagement with Ibn Sīnā's views has been the subject of rigorous debate between later Muslim philosophers. Some consider Mīr Dāmād's work an original contribution to Islamic philosophy, while others, such as Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, consider his ideas on createdness and eternity as simply another rendition of Ibn Sīnā's own views. A third group regards Mīr Dāmād's work as a means of clarifying and responding to the ambiguities of Ibn Sīnā's views on the same subject matter.

We have selected for this chapter an extract from Mīr Dāmād's *Qabasāt*, known to be one of the most difficult works of Islamic philosophy. Due to limited space, we have reluctantly omitted other significant works from this section in favour of a translation of the first *qabas*, which discusses subjects such as kinds of creation and the divisions of existence; the establishment of a base for judgment among different categories of existents, and means of defining the problems subject to dispute. This section is particularly rich in terms of Mīr Dāmād's references to Ibn Sīnā's view on time and the problem of createdness and eternity of the world, as well as references to other philosopher including Suhrawardī, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.

M. Aminrazavi

SPARKS OF FIRE

Kitāb al-Qabasāt

Translated for this volume by Keven Brown from Mīr Dāmād, *al-Qabasāt*, ed. M. Mohaghegh, T. Izutsu, Mūsawī Bihbahānī and I. Dībājī (Tehran, 1977), pp. 1–36.

Introduction

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Divine guidance is from God, the Mighty, the All-Knowing. Praise be to God, the One, the Peerless, the Everlasting, the Protector of all things, the Maker of every existent, and blessings be upon the One who followed Him among the concourse of the Prophets and served Him with full devotion among the assemblage of the Messengers, Whom He sent forth with the Preserved Tablet in the station of Maḥmūd. And blessings be upon the chosen ones among His holy family, who are infallible in their testimony and in their deeds.

Now then, this neediest of creatures and poorest of the servants of God, the Most Praised, the Self-Subsisting, His humble servant, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, called Bāqir Dāmād al-Ḥusaynī (may God make his end blessed in both worlds), affirms that one of the spiritual companions whom I was not able to dissuade with a refusal asked me with great insistence to unfold for him by means of citation (*al-dhikr*)¹—with the clarity of ‘objective certainty’ (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*)² by means of demonstrations, and with decisive propositions set forth according to accepted principles and rules—what has become clear to the eye of my intellect, to the eye of my heart, and to the vision of my soul through the manifest light of God and His irresistible power, namely that the Lord of primary origination and generation is alone in preexistence (*qidam*), prior to perpetuity (*dawām*), solitary in pre-eternity (*azaliyyah*), and the exclusive possessor of eternity without beginning or end (*sarmadiyyah*),³ while the universe with all its elements and parts, its compounds

1. The term *al-dhikr*, lit. ‘remembrance’, also means ‘quotation’ or ‘citation’, and it may have that meaning here, since Mīr Dāmād quotes frequently from his predecessors to support his arguments. Alternatively, the meaning here may be the Qur’ān, which is also called *al-dhikr* (see Qur’ān 16:44).

2. The term *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* refers to the highest in a three-tiered hierarchy of stages of certainty derived from verses in the Qur’ān. The first is *‘ilm al-yaqīn* (cognitive certainty), which is an understanding of things reached by reasoning, such as an understanding of fire reached by reading books. The second is *‘ayn al-yaqīn* (visual certainty), which is an understanding of things obtained by seeing them with one’s own eyes. We see the fire. The third is *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (objective certainty), which is an understanding of things reached by direct experience. We are burned by the fire. (See Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’ān*, vol. 2, n. 5673.)

3. In philosophy and theology, *qidam* denotes both ‘preexistence’ and ‘eternity’, the latter

and members—whether these be intelligences, souls, matters, forms, bodies, or accidents—is preceded by non-existence, new in creation, subject to destruction, and afflicted with nullification.

By the life of the Beloved: the execution of a clear demonstration and a proper exposition through rational methods on this theme is a difficult affair and it has not yet been achieved. The temperaments of thoughts are sick for the desire of it, and the loins of minds are bereft of its countenance. There is no easy path thereto from the beginning until the end of time. Even one of the pillars among the eminent philosophers and one of the luminaries among the great minds, our foregone companion in this endeavour, the master of the philosophers of Islam and their chief [i.e. Ibn Sīnā], in *Topics*, which is a book on the art of dialectic (*al-jadal*) among the arts of logic in the *Kitāb al-Shifā'*,¹ has stated, in emulation of what is in the First Discipline,² that this problem is, from whichever position one takes, dialectical and not based on demonstration, due to the lack of demonstrative proofs on either side,³ and he considered the question of whether the world is created (*ḥādith*) or eternal (*azālī*)³ a dialectical question having two contrary positions.

But, lo! I shall carry out what the questioner has requested and fulfil his hopes through these 'blazing brands' (*qabasāt*), each of which contains 'flashes' (*wamḍāt*) and 'gleams' (*wamīḍāt*), in hopes of obtaining a glimpse of the face of God, the All-Bountiful. The recompense thereof is with God. How glorious is His remembrance and how abundant His reward! He, verily, is the Lord of wondrous grace and ancient bounty, the Fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom. By Him all things are preserved and in Him is our best defence.

meaning without beginning or end, while *azāl* signifies the particular aspect of eternity being without a beginning. Dāmād uses the term *sarmad* customarily in *Qabasāt*, however, rather than *qidam*, to refer to the domain of God's beginningless and endless eternity.

1. i.e., Aristotle's books on logic.

2. 'A demonstration is a syllogism whose premises must be accepted, i.e., are certain. That is why the conclusion, too, is certain' (Ibn Sīnā, *Remarks and Admonitions: Part One: Logic*, tr. Shams C. Inati, Toronto, 1984, p. 38). Premises acceptable in demonstration include those that are self-evident based on sensible experience or unanimous agreement. Dialectic, on the other hand, may employ less than certain premises, such as propositions based on authority and custom (*ibid.*, pp. 30–31).

3. The term *ḥādith* is the antonym of *qadīm* or *azālī*, both of which mean to be 'preexistent', or 'without cause of existence or a beginning'. Thus, *ḥādith* means to be 'brought into existence', 'created', 'originated', or 'with a beginning'.

The First Blazing Brand (*qabas*)

*On the Kinds of Creation and the Divisions of Existence According to Them,
Establishing the Bases of Judgment, and Defining the Area of Dispute*

Flash (wamḍah) [1.1]

In Book Six, Chapter Two of the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'*, he [Ibn Sinā] tries to define the concept of creation (*ḥudūth*)¹ and to make threefold its primary classification, which is comprehensive in accordance with the comprehensiveness of its three primary divisions. Thus he tells us:

The meaning of that which is called 'primary origination' (*ibdā'*)² by the philosophers is causing something to exist 'after' an absolute non-existence (*lays muṭlaq*)³ for it belongs to the effect through itself (*fī nafsihi*) that it is non-existent, while [at the same time] it belongs to it through its cause that it is existent. That which belongs to something by virtue of itself is more prior for the mind, essentially ('*ind al-dhihn bi'l-*

1. *Ḥudūth* is the antonym of *qidam*, which is usually translated as 'eternity' or 'preexistence.' *Qidam* is thus the state of being essentially existent, of having no prior non-existence, no cause of existence, and no beginning. *Ḥudūth*, therefore, is the state of being brought into existence through a cause after non-existence, and of being originated. In English, this is the meaning of the term 'creation', because in theology both God's act of bringing the universe into existence and the act of being brought into existence are called 'creation'. To translate the term *ḥudūth* as 'origination', 'coming into being', or 'having a beginning' in this context is also perfectly acceptable. Although the divine act of creation is a single act, according to Mīr Dāmād, it manifests different aspects at different levels of existence, and these different aspects of the act of creation are distinguished by different names, such as *ibdā'*, *ṣun'*, *ikhtira'*, *iḥdāth*, and *takwīn*. The primary divisions of creation, however, are three.

2. Ibn Sinā explains that *ibdā'* 'refers to existence coming to something from another, dependent on it only, and not on the intermediary of matter, instrument, or time' (*Ishārāt, Namaṭ* Five, Chapter 9, 524). The intelligences of the spheres and the universal natures, for example, are created by *ibdā'*, which we may translate as 'primary origination', or 'direct creation', because their existentiality does not depend upon the intermediary of matter, instrument, or time. Fazlur Rahman interprets *ibdā'* as 'eternal emanation' ('Mīr Dāmād's Concept of *Ḥudūth dahrī*: A Contribution to the Study of God-World Relationship Theories in Safavid Iran', JNES, 39, 2 (1980), p. 141), because, according to the Peripatetic philosophers, the objects of primary origination are co-eternal with God, since they are not preceded by real non-existence, or privation ('*adam*'), although they are preceded by an absolute (or 'logical') non-existence, which does not conflict with their existence. This is why Ibn Sinā states in the passage quoted by Mīr Dāmād above that *ibdā'* 'is the most excellent form of giving existence, because privation [i.e., real non-existence] is categorically excluded and existence is imposed upon it'. To the Peripatetic philosophers who accept this interpretation, something that is created (*ḥādīth*) and contingent (*mumkin*) can still be eternal (*qadīm*), as long as it is not preceded by privation in matter. The primary goal of Mīr Dāmād in *Qabasāt* is to dispute this claim and to prove, on the contrary, that all contingent existents, even the intelligences, are radically separated from God and preceded by real non-existence.

3. The use of the term 'absolute' (*muṭlaq*) means that this 'non-existence' is 'unrestricted and unqualified'. It belongs to all things by virtue of the nature of possibility. In other words, 'absolute non-existence' refers to the essential, or logical, non-existence of things in themselves and their existence through another. The absolute (*muṭlaq*) is the opposite of the qualified (*muqayyad*) and the non-absolute.

dhāt), not temporally, than that which belongs to it from something else. Therefore, every effect is existent after being non-existent, where 'after' means essentially (or: logically) [and not temporally] posterior.¹

If the term 'creation' (*al-ḥadath*) is applied [in this manner] to everything which possesses existence after non-existence, then every effect is created (*muḥdath*). If, however, the term is not applied in this way, but rather the condition of a created thing is that a time precedes it which ceases with its coming into existence, since temporal posteriority cannot coexist with temporal priority, but rather is distinct from it in existence, then not every effect is created, but only those which are preceded by time and, without doubt, movement and change. This you know, and we will not dispute the terms.

Now, a created being in the sense which does not necessitate time is such that its existence must either come after an absolute non-existence or after a non-absolute non-existence (*lays ghayr muṭlaq*), that is to say, after a contrary, specific privation ('*adam*') in an existing matter, as you know.² If its existence comes after an absolute non-existence, its emanation from its cause is called 'primary origination' (*ibdā*). This is the most excellent form of giving existence, because privation is categorically excluded here and existence is imposed upon it [*ex nihilo*]. For if privation³

1. For example, the heavens, which are considered eternal and unchanging, have an essential but not temporal posteriority to their cause.

2. Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī, Mīr Dāmād's student and commentator, explains that this privation belongs to the perpetually existing celestial bodies in the state of their specific matters. (*Sharḥ-i kitāb al-Qabasāt*, Tehran, 1997. p. 95.)

3. The term '*adam*' means both 'non-existence' and 'privation', and Mīr Dāmād explains that '*adam*' is of three kinds in the usage of Ibn Sīnā. It is the third kind, 'real non-existence' ('*adam ṣarīḥ*'), which corresponds to 'privation' because of its association with matter. Of the three kinds of non-existence, only privation is the true contradictory of actual existence because these two cannot coexist together. In further explanation of this passage of Ibn Sīnā, which specifies three kinds of non-existence and three corresponding kinds of creation, Mīr Dāmād provided the following to 'Alawī: 'To summarize the argument of our companion [Ibn Sīnā]: non-existence ('*adam*') is of three kinds for possible beings (*al-mumkin*) in the realm of contingency: (1) That non-existence which is absolute non-existence (*lays muṭlaq*) in the stage of the essence (*dhāt*), which is commensurate with the nature of possibility; it belongs to every possible existent from the moment it exists. (2) Quantifiable temporal non-existence within a boundary separate from the boundary of existence; it belongs to every temporal creation, insofar as it is a temporal creation, prior to the time of its existence [in time]. (3) Perpetual real non-existence ('*adam ṣarīḥ dahri*'), whose precedence to existence is unquantifiable; it belongs to every existent via a receiving matter, as it is a necessary condition for fashioning (*ṣun*). Non-existence in the first two senses is not contradictory to existence. The first is united with existence in the real world and precedes it essentially [or logically] with respect to the stage of the essence. The second is in a time distinct from the time of existence, and one of the conditions for mutual contradiction between temporal things is being in the same time. Therefore, only real non-existence, in which no boundary whatsoever can be conceived nor any state distinguished, is contradictory to existence. This being determined, it is apparent that creation (*ḥudūth*) also has three significations which correspond to the three kinds of non-existence: (1) Essential creation, which is coming-

were allowed to precede [its] existence, its coming-into-being (*takwīn*) would be impossible except through matter, and the power of giving existence would be weak and deficient from the beginning.

In the *Ta'liqāt* (Annotations), also, he comments on this theme: 'The meaning of "absolute non-existence", here, is a non-existence which is simple and unqualified, as compared to that non-existence which is qualified by not being able to coexist with actual existence and which is contrary to it, and not conjoinable with it in the thing itself whatsoever.'

As for creation 'in the sense which does not necessitate time,' which is the existence of something 'after' its real, absolute non-existence, it is of two kinds:¹ (1) It is either the existence of something essentially following its absolute non-existence, since the stage of its actual existence 'follows' [logically] the stage of its absolute non-existence with respect to its own essence (*dhāt*). This is not incompatible with the actualization of the essence by the Agent, for actual existence is realized by the Agent emanating it. This kind of creation is called 'essential creation' (*hudūth dhātī*) and its permanent emanation, in this manner, is called 'primary origination' (*ibdā'*) by them. There is no conflict between the actualization (*fi'liyyah*)² and existence of the thing itself, with respect to depending on the emanation of the Agent, and the nullification and non-existence commensurate with the substance of the quiddity

into-existence preceded by absolute non-existence with respect to the stage of the essence; this is an essential priority, not a separate priority. (2) Temporal creation, which is coming-into-existence following temporal non-existence, where the posteriority is separate and quantifiable. (3) Perpetual creation, which is coming-into-existence following real non-existence, where the posteriority is separate and unquantifiable. It is the extraction of existence from absolute non-existence. If real non-existence, which is the contradictory of existence, is not empowered at all, but existence is obtained eternally from the Agent, this is primary origination (*ibdā'*), the best of the kinds of causation. After real contradictory non-existence, if the possible is empowered, this is fashioning (*ṣun'*) and production (*iḥdāth*) in perpetuity (*dahr*). It is a form of bringing-into-existence weak from the beginning, since it only pertains to what is possible to generate from matter. So temporal creation and perpetual creation, though differing conceptually in meaning, are inseparable in fact with respect to existence. The same applies to the relation between fashioning (*ṣun'*) and generation (*takwīn*). This is the doctrine of those who oppose the creation of the world (*hudūth al-ālam*) among the philosophers, as explained in the *Ishārāt*. (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, pp. 93–94.)'

1. According to Ibn Sīnā, the transcendent intelligences are not preceded by privation, while the heavenly bodies, each of which possesses a specific matter, are. Both of these two kinds of atemporal existents, however, are preceded by absolute non-existence. Rahman notes that Mīr Dāmād's goal is to 'reinterpret and reconstruct Ibn Sīnā's doctrine in such a way that all 'essential contingency' (*imkān dhātī*) entails a real dislocation of being with God and is preceded by real non-existence [i.e., privation], whether heavenly spheres or Intelligences' ('Concept of *Hudūth dahrī*', p. 147).

2. 'Alawī explains that this term, 'actualization' (*fi'liyyah*), is synonymous with the essence (*dhāt*) or determination (*taqarrur*) of something (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, p. 97). And Mīr Dāmād says: 'The stage of the actually created essence itself is called 'the stage of the determination and the actualization' (*Qabasāt*, p. 38).

(*māhiyyah*) itself as such.¹ Does it not follow clearly that the thing itself is more encompassing than the stage of the quiddity as itself?

(2) Or it is existence preceded by real non-existence (*'adam ṣarīḥ*), which is contrary to the occurrence of actual existence in the real world (*matn al-wāqī*). This is what he intended by the statement: 'After a non-absolute non-existence, that is to say, after a contrary, specific privation in an existing matter.' This kind of non-existence has no essential priority but a separate, distinct, atemporal, non-flowing, unmeasurable, unquantifiable priority. This kind of creation is nothing but perpetual creation (*ḥudūth dahrī*). The emanation of existence following real unquantifiable non-existence is called 'production' (*iḥdāth*) and 'fashioning' (*ṣun*)² by the philosophers, and real non-existence and actual existence cannot coexist in the same matter or place with respect to the thing itself whatsoever.

As for creation in the sense which requires time, it is of only one kind. This is

1. The following clarification on the meaning of the term 'quiddity' (*māhiyyah*) and its close relation to the term 'essence' (*dhāt*) is provided by Jamil Ṣalībā from the *Ta'rifāt* of Jurjānī: 'The quiddity, therefore, is (1) that which is answered to the question "what is it", or (2) it is that by which something is what it is. 'It is, insofar as it is itself, neither existent nor non-existent, neither universal nor particular, neither specific nor general [otherwise, how could it receive these contradictories?]. ... The term "quiddity" is applied predominately to an intellected thing, such as the intellection of "man", which is "rational animal" when the gaze is severed from external existence. The intellected thing, insofar as it is the answer to the question "what is it" is called the "quiddity" (*māhiyyah*). But insofar as its affirmation (*thubūt*) is objective, it is called a "reality" (*ḥaqīqah*), and insofar as it is distinguished from others, it is called an "identity" (*huwiyyah*), and insofar as it has concomitants predicated to it, it is an "essence" (*dhāt*) ... and insofar as it is the substrate of accidents, it is a "substance" [or 'entity'] (*jawhar*)' (Jurjānī, *al-Ta'rifāt*). ... The terms "quiddity", "reality", and "essence" may be used synonymously, but the reality and the essence are applied predominately to the quiddity with respect to objective [or external] existence.' (*al-Mu'jam al-falsafī*, vol. 2, 314–315.)

2. Ibn Sīnā's commentator, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, explains that Ibn Sīnā 'means by "fashioning" (*ṣun*) bringing something into existence preceded by privation. ... and he means by "primary origination" (*ibdā*) the opposite of this, namely, bringing something into existence not preceded by privation' (*al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, 485). As already explained, Ibn Sīnā interlinks 'fashioning', 'production', privation, and matter. Mīr Dāmād, however, makes a different distinction. He says: 'The emanation (*ḥudūth*) of the Agent Maker (magnified by His sovereignty) with respect to the contents of perpetuity is termed "primary origination" (*ibdā*) and "fashioning" (*ṣun*), and with respect to temporal creatures, it is termed production (*iḥdāth*) and generation (*takwīn*)' (*Qabasāt*, p. 26). Dāmād, therefore, distinguishes *ṣun* from *iḥdāth* by having the former refer to perpetual creation and the latter to temporal creation. The critical point is that Mīr Dāmād holds that any kind of real creation must be preceded by real non-existence, or privation. Dāmād is going to prove that all temporal and essential creations are ultimately dependent on perpetual creation. As explained by 'Alawī, for Mīr Dāmād both *ibdā* and *ṣun* give rise to creation in the realm of perpetuity. He states: 'But in our view, which is that of the philosophers who are firmly grounded, both the primary originated and the generated are entirely in perpetuity and equal with respect to the prior predominance of real non-existence contradictory to existence over them. Then its predominance was removed and the wall of its power collapsed with the creation of existence in the realm of perpetuity through the fashioning (*ṣun*) of the Maker. The only difference is that the generated is preceded by matter while the primary originated is not' (*Sharḥ-i qabasāt*, p. 147).

the existence of something in time being preceded by its temporal, quantifiable, and flowing non-existence, which occurs in the time quantifiably and temporally prior to it. Bringing something into existence in time after its temporal, quantifiable, flowing non-existence, which is included in the genus of extension and non-extension, duration and non-duration,³ is called generation (*takwīn*).

This is the way of making the primary categories of creation three, as explained in the *Shifāʾ*. Let it be recognized. In the *Metaphysics* of the *Najāt*, he [Ibn Sīnā] states:

Know that just as something may be created (*muḥdath*) in relation to time, so likewise may it be created in relation to essence, for created beings exist after they were not existing, and posteriority, like priority, may be either temporal or essential....Every effect is firstly non-existent through itself, hence accidental in relation to its cause, and secondly existent [through its cause]; consequently, every effect is created; that is to say, it receives its existence from something besides itself ‘after’ being non-existent by virtue of itself. Therefore, every effect, by reason of itself, is created. Even if it exists for the whole duration of time, for example, receiving that existence from the Giver of Existence, it is still created, for its existence after its non-existence is an essential posteriority, in the way we have explained, and its creation is not merely for a period of time, but rather it is created with respect to the whole of time and perpetuity (*dahr*). It is not possible for it to be created after it was non-existent unless the matter out of which it was created preceded it.⁴

He is stating clearly here that creation, in accordance with the terminology of the discipline [of philosophy], can be applied in three different ways: (1) essential creation, (2) temporal creation, and (3) perpetual creation. It is also evident that existing after not existing takes place in perpetuity, if one were to reflect.

In the *Ishārāt*, near the end of *Namaʾ* Five, he [Ibn Sīnā] says: ‘No state (*ḥāl*) is distinguishable in real non-existence (*ʿadam ṣarīḥ*). It is fundamental that it does not cause anything to exist whatsoever, or that things are not caused to exist by it in any way, for any state is absolutely contrary to it.’ The author of the *Muḥākamāt*⁵ states:

Since there is no distinction in real non-existence—otherwise the restraint of the Agent from giving existence would be more suitable to some states than to others, or the non-emanation of the effect from the Agent would be more suitable to some states than to others—the qualification of non-existence by ‘real’ is a precaution against the temporal non-existence of a created thing preceded by matter.

3. Extension and non-extension refer to line and plane vs. point (which is non-extended), and duration and non-duration refer to time vs. the now (which is non-extended and indivisible).

4. Ibn Sīnā is here referring to the creation of the heavenly spheres, which exist for the whole duration of time but which require the pre-existence of matter for their creation.

5. Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī is the author of this work.

Wamḍah [1.2]

Among the noteworthy arguments for establishing perpetual creation (*hudūth dahri*), with respect to the priority of real non-existence in the empirical world, without consideration of extension and non-extension, is what the master, Abu'l-Barakāt, recounted from the philosophers in his *Mu'tabar*. He says:

They said to one who required a period of non-existence (*'adam*) preceding the existence of a creature, as a way of instruction and admonition: 'Is this period limited and determined, as a day, a month, or a year is determined, or does any period of time suffice it?' The questioner responded: 'Indeed, any period of non-existence preceding existence is sufficient to create a creature.' They asked: 'Is one year of non-existence preceding its existence a reasonable conception?' 'Yes,' he answered. They continued: 'If the year was changed into one month, would this still be sufficient or not?' 'A month would certainly suffice just as a year suffices.' Then the question was transferred to a day, an hour, part of an hour, and a minute. The result of this chain of questions was to show that time has no causative influence upon creation, because a large amount of the causation of a cause is not like a small amount of it. Rather, all of the cause is necessary for all of the effect. Therefore, if some of the time hypothesized for creation is removed, and a thing is not removed from its status of being 'created', then removing the whole of time will not alter the fact of creation. It is only influential in a weak sense, such that the progression of time certainly actualizes creation, but if it is removed, creation is not removed.¹

Wamḍah [1.3]

Is it not a fact that extension and non-extension, divisibility and non-divisibility, quantification and non-quantification all pertain to fixed continuous quantities and their principles, that is to say, volume, plane, line, and point, and to an unfixed continuous quantity and its imaginary divider, in other words, time and the now? But existence, insofar as it is existence, and non-existence (*'adam*), insofar as it is non-existence, do not pertain to any of this in any way. None of this is admissible for existence and non-existence whatsoever, except accidentally with respect to a subject. Whenever it enters under the genus of quantification and non-quantification, and insofar as its occurrence coincides with what is measurable or non-measurable, there is a corresponding association which points without doubt to its 'in-ness' [in space and time]. Furthermore, these conditions belong to the accidents of matter and its attachments. But that [state of the subject] which the attachments and encumbrances of matter do not embrace is certainly sanctified from all of these limitations.

1. 'Alawī explains that, to Mīr Dāmād, Baghdādī's argument shows that any real non-existence preceding creation is not in time. For this reason, Mīr Dāmād consistently equates 'real non-existence' with 'perpetual non-existence', i.e., non-existence prior to existence in *dahr*. ('Alawī, *Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, pp. 100–101.)

Therefore, three containers (*aw'iah*) are required for existence with respect to the thing itself: (1) time (*zamān*), which is the container of measurable, flowing existence or measurable, continuous non-existence belonging to changeable beings insofar as they are changeable; (2) perpetuity (*dahr*), which is the container of real existence preceded by real non-existence, beyond the horizon of quantification and non-quantification, belonging to changeless things insofar as they are changeless, and it is the inner dimension of the real world (*ḥāqq matn al-wāqī'*);¹ (3) eternity (*sarmad*), which is the container of pure, real, changeless existence utterly sanctified from the occurrence of change and exalted above any precedence of non-existence whatsoever. It is pure, real, unqualified actuality in every respect. Just as perpetuity is more exalted and more encompassing than time, so is eternity more exalted, more lofty, more sanctified, and greater than the world of perpetuity. Therefore, when real non-existence is understood to precede creation (*hudūth*), the most appropriate and best name for it is 'perpetual creation'.

Our companion [Ibn Sīnā] has made the following points [on this theme] in the *Ta'liqāt* (Annotations):²

The intellect perceives three states of being. The first is the existence of a being *in* time. This is the temporal dimension of changeable things which have a beginning and an end, where the beginning is unlike the end. Indeed, these temporal creatures are passing away, constantly in a state of flux, and complete one state only to enter another state. The second is the existence of a being *with* time, which is called perpetuity (*dahr*). This state of being surrounds time, and is the heavenly sphere which exists together with time. Time is connected to this state of being because it is produced from the motion of the sphere. This is the relation of the changeless to the changeable. Nevertheless, the estimative faculty (*wahm*) is unable to grasp it, since it views each thing in a particular time, and the notions of 'was' and 'will be', of past, present, and future, possess it.³ The third is the existence of a

1. The term *ḥāqq* means 'the middle', or 'the centre', of something; or it may mean 'true' and 'real.' The term *matn* primarily means 'the main part' of something. As a part of the body, it is 'the loins.' (Sayyid Ja'far Sajjādi states that: 'Mīr Dāmād means by the term *matn al-wāqī'* mostly the world which transcends time and temporal things' (*Farhang-i 'ulūm-i 'aqlī* [Tehran, 1361 Sh./1982], p. 524. Rahman translates both *matn* and *ḥāqq* in the sense of 'domain', 'field', and 'level' ('Concept of *Hudūth dahrī'*, 141). Another term that Mīr Dāmād often uses in correspondence with *ḥāqq* and *matn* is *kabd*, which means 'heart', 'core', and 'centre' (see example of all three together in *Qabasāt*, p. 410). In light of Mīr Dāmād's usage of these terms, I believe that 'inner dimension of the real world' is a fair translation for *ḥāqq matn al-wāqī'*.

2. Through the large number of quoted passages which follow, Mīr Dāmād draws support for establishing the characteristics of the domains of eternity, perpetuity, and time.

3. 'According to Ibn Sīnā, estimation is a reasoning faculty whose function, unlike theoretical reasoning, is to make particular judgments in terms of the particulars of sense. It is, however, incapable of abstract and universal thought. When it attempts to make judgments about nonsensible particulars, it is prone to err', Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, tr. M. Marmura, as *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* (Provo, UT, 2000), p. 230, n. 9. Thus, it cannot follow abstract

changeless being with the changeless,¹ and this is called eternity (*sarmad*), which encompasses perpetuity.

A temporal thing has a beginning and an end where the beginning is unlike its end. The estimative faculty fixes a particular time for each thing, but it is impossible that time itself should have a particular time.

The heavenly sphere does not change in itself, but motion is a state contingent upon it.

That which is in something and encompassed by that thing is such that it changes with the change of that thing. Hence, something existing in time changes with the change of time, the accidents of time supervene upon it, and its periods vary according to it. Therefore, this time which is the beginning of its existence or the beginning of its action is different from that time which is its end, for the former time has slipped away and been overtaken. But that which is *with* a thing does not change with its change and its accidents do not affect it.

Perpetuity is the container of time, because it encompasses it.

Time is a weak mode of existence due to its being unfixed and flowing.

The heavenly sphere is the bearer of time, and its motive power is the agent of time.

He also states in the *Ta'liqāt*:

By our saying 'when' and 'where' is not meant something being in place or time compoundly. We mean here by a 'composite' the subject (*mawdū'*) together with a relation. Indeed, the relations themselves are intended. Therefore, the relation itself is 'where', not the related and the object of relation, and not the sum of the relation and the two things related. Similarly, the state (*hāl*) pertains to a relation, like fraternity.

'When' is being in time, and one time in fact may be a time for a large number [of

arguments that maintain that God has no spatial existence or that there is no time before the world's existence.

1. 'Alawī comments upon this passage at length, and he brings up one of the main points of difference between Mīr Dāmād and his predecessors. He says: 'It is clear that this relationship [of the changeless to the changeless] is eternity (*sarmad*), whether it be (1) through simultaneity or (2) through priority and simultaneity together in two respects: As for the first, the philosophers who advocate eternity (*qidam*) hold this view, since they have determined that the absolutely changeless things belonging to the incorporeal intelligences exist together with Him eternally. The second view, which our teacher, the author, holds, is conformable to what the divine philosophers teach' (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, p. 104). The gist is that, according to Mīr Dāmād, God is prior in actual existence to the incorporeal intelligences, but He is simultaneous with them in the sense that two correlatives, such as priority and posteriority, are inseparable in the mind. Hence, one cannot imagine a *prior* thing without assuming at the same time the existence of something *posterior* to it. Correlatives always exist simultaneously in the mind, though not necessarily in objective reality. The point is that where the Creator is concerned, His priority to all else is actual, while His simultaneity with other changeless things is only in the mind. In *Wamīd* 3.7.4, Mīr Dāmād denies that eternal simultaneity, or co-eternity, applies in any actual sense to God, since He is the sole possessor of eternal priority.

things] in actuality. But the 'when' of each of them is contrary to the 'when' of each other, so that each one of them being in that time is different [in some way] from the being [in that time] of the other. 'Where' is something being in place, meaning its existence in it, where 'existence' is a relational existence, not an absolute existence which is contrary to it. Therefore, Zayd's being at the market is different from 'Amr's being at it. Being *in* time is not the same as time itself. If one thing's being in a particular time ceases, the being of another in it does not cease. Time does not exist in a particular time. Similarly, it does not cease to exist in a particular time.

The relationship of the First (exalted be He) to the active intellect or to the heavenly sphere is not a quantifiable or temporal relationship, but an eternal one. The relationship of eternal to eternal is called eternity (*sarmad*) and perpetuity (*dahr*).

Time includes within it that which is changeable. The relationship of eternal to time is perpetuity. Time is changeable while eternal is unchangeable.

Whatever is located in time is divisible, such as motion and what possesses motion. Contiguity (*mumāssah*) occurs at the divider (*taraf*) of time, and the divider itself is not divisible. Non-contiguity only occurs in time because it is the parting of contiguity, and parting is a motion.

He says in the *Shifā'*, in more than one place:

Extension is inconceivable in perpetuity (*dahr*) and in eternity (*sarmad*); otherwise it would be a measure for motion [as time is for the movement of the sphere]. Therefore, time is like an effect of perpetuity, and perpetuity is like an effect of eternity. If the relationship of the causes of bodies to their principles were not perpetual, the bodies could not exist, let alone their motions; and if the relationship of time to the principle of time were not perpetual, time could not be realized.¹

In his *Uyūn al-ḥikmah*, he states:

The essences (*dhawāt*) of changeless things and the essences of things which are changeable in one respect and changeless in another, if considered from the point of view of their changelessness, do not exist in time, but rather with time. The relationship of that which is with time but not in time [to that which is in time] is called perpetuity (*dahr*). The relationship of that which is not in time to that which is not in time, by virtue of not being in time, is better called eternity (*sarmad*). Perpetuity in its essence belongs to eternity, but in relation to time is called 'perpetuity'.

1. This passage points out the necessity of perpetuity as the domain where the perpetual principles of the causes of bodies exist. If these principles were not changeless, bodies and their motions could not exist. Mīr Dāmād often says that the changeless aspect of changeable things, insofar as they are changeless, exists in perpetuity. 'Alawī comments: 'In other words, the parts of their existence which are their causes are united to the principles of their existence, which are purely incorporeal things among the intelligible substances. From this it is apparent that time is like an effect of perpetuity' (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, p. 111). Eternal existence (*sarmad*), in turn, is 'the efficient cause of the perpetual existences, and thus necessarily encompasses them' (*Ibid.* 106).

And in the *Ishārāt*, he explains:

It is required for the Necessary Being's knowledge of particular beings to not be a temporal knowledge; otherwise the past, present, and future could be added to it [as a new factor] and change could occur to an Attribute of His Essence. Rather, His knowledge of particular beings must be through a means sanctified and exalted above both time and perpetuity.

By the term 'relationship' (*nisbah*) used above, 'simultaneity' (*ma'iyah*) and 'priority' (*qabliyyah*) are meant. In *Namaṭ* Five [of the *Ishārāt*], after explaining the types of priority, posteriority, and simultaneity, he says: 'If it is possible for something to be in an identical state in relation to each thing, and it has an effect, it is not improbable that eternity (*sarmad*) is a requisite of it.' The [Seal of] the Most Excellent Scholars¹ in his commentary of this has said:

He has described that relationship by 'eternity' (*sarmad*) because, just as his usage requires the application of 'time' (*zamān*) to the relationship which exists between one changeable thing and another in the world of extension, it requires the application of 'perpetuity' (*dahr*) to the relationship which exists between changeable things and changeless things, and 'eternity' to the relationship which exists between one changeless thing and another.

In the *Physics* of the *Najāt*, he has set forth the same theme he has repeated in the *Shifā'*: 'Whatever exists *with* time is not *in* it. We exist with a grain of wheat but we are not in it.' He considers it impossible for its existence to have a relation to time by in-ness (*fī'iyyah*). Then he says:

That which is outside of this [temporal] whole is not in time. Rather, if its estimation of being with time is accepted and acknowledged, and it has an unchanging nature coinciding with the unchanging nature of time and what is in time, this relationship and this consideration toward time is called perpetuity. Consequently, perpetuity encompasses time.

His student² wrote in the *Tahṣīl*:

It is evident that time does not exist in time, so that its non-existence would be in another time, and that time is among those things, like motion and matter, which are deficient in existence. As for temporal things, they are those things which have a before and an after, a past and a future, a beginning and an end, such as motion or things possessing motion. As for that which is outside of time, it exists with time. The 'withness' that we mention pertains to an object of relation; I mean a relation occurring to a particular time (*matā*). Thus it necessarily has a natural connection to

1. Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.

2. Bahmanyār.

time, so that an actual mutual relationship exists between them, not a hypothetical one—because one is those things that bear time and the other is its agent—or a kind of connection whereby this ‘withness’ is possible. If this ‘withness’ is the relationship of an unchanging thing to a changeable thing, it is perpetuity (*dahr*), and it encompasses time. If it is the relationship of the unchanging to the unchanging, it is best called eternity (*sarmad*). Indeed, this being of the changeless with the changing, and the changeless with the changeless, corresponds exactly to the existence of temporal beings in time.¹ This ‘withness’ is like the ‘when’ (*matā*) of changeless things, and the being of temporal things in time is their particular ‘when.’ Neither perpetuity nor eternity have extension, whether conceptually or in actuality; otherwise these domains would be a measure for motion.

He also states: ‘Existence has no beginning and no end, for whatever has a beginning and an end has a conceptual difference between these two states, like the difference between genus and species; or a quantitative difference; or a numerical difference. Existence cannot be differentiated in this way.’

The Master of Illumination [Suhrawardī] in the *Physics* of the *Muṭāraḥāt* states:

If it is said: ‘A state of rest is in time,’ this is permissible. If it is said: ‘A body is in time,’ this is with respect to its motion.² If it is said: ‘The now is in time,’ this is permissible,

1. According to Bahmanyār and Ibn Sīnā, just as the meaning of perpetual (*dahrī*) ‘withness’ is the relationship between the unchanging and the changing to which it corresponds, the meaning of eternal (*sarmadī*) ‘withness’ is the relationship between the self-subsistent Unchanging and the contingent unchanging. But in the Third *Qabas* Mīr Dāmād is going to refute the very notion of eternal withness, or coeternity, and replace it with the notion of eternal priority-perpetual posteriority, with ‘withness’, or simultaneity, being limited to the domains of perpetuity and time.

2. A similar statement is made by Suhrawardī in the *Talwīḥāt*: ‘The body, insofar as it is a body, is not in time, but insofar as it is in motion, is in time. Absolutely unquantifiable, unchangeable things, like the intelligences, and that which is both changeable and unchanging in some respect, like bodies, are with time, not in it’ (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, p. 120). Yet according to ‘Alawī, time, as generated through the motion of the outermost sphere, ‘encompasses all bodies, the highest of them and the lowest of them from the outer limit to the centre’ (Ibid. 117). The principle is this: ‘In sum, the relation of something to time by occurrence *in* it is only with respect to the changeable in actuality, as is the case with motion, or potentially, as is the case with rest. Thus, the meaning of its being in an hour is that insofar as motion transpires in its place, it is in an hour. As for the unchanging, its relation to time is through occurrence *with* it’ (Ibid. 138).

Mīr Dāmād confirms this position and takes great pains in *Qabasāt* to develop the proposition that all temporal things are simultaneously changeless and incorporeal in one respect and changing and material in another respect. They are changeless and incorporeal with respect to their existence and their creation in relation to God, which occurs in perpetuity, while they are changing and material with respect to their motion and appearance in time. Thus, Mīr Dāmād states: ‘It is not possible for body, insofar as it is body, to occur in time, nor insofar as it is existent, since only the unfixed state occurs in time, and this is motion. Thus body, insofar as it is body, is in place; insofar as it is existent, it occurs in perpetuity; and insofar as it changes and moves, it

if the instantaneous now is meant, and the now which is a short span (*waqt*) is in time so long as it is a part and it is counting. The relationship of time to motions is like the relationship of a measuring stick to what is measured.

After explaining time, perpetuity, and eternity, he says:

Perpetuity (*dahr*) is on the horizon of time. Time is like an effect of perpetuity, and perpetuity is like an effect of eternity (*sarmad*). If the relationship of incorporeal things to their principles were not absolutely constant, bodies could not exist, let alone their motions. If the relationship of time to the principle of time were not constant, time could not be realized. Hence, it is certain that eternity is the cause of perpetuity, and perpetuity is the cause of time.

Then he says:

That simpleton known as Abu'l-Barakāt, when he wanted to say something on the question of time, in his carelessness and confusion, stated that time is the measure of existence. I wish I knew what measure existence has! How many cubits does it extend? To how many cubits does it correspond? He even advanced as one of his incredible arguments what some of the people say to each other: 'May God lengthen thy existence!' Time is too precious for it to be wasted in considering such things.

In sum, what we have recited for you is agreed upon by the masters of philosophy and their teachers.¹ Aristotle, the teacher of the Greeks, made frequent references to this theme, but he fell short of working out its implications. In the *Theology*, with regard to the main principles, he affirms that every intelligible is outside of time, because every intelligible and intelligence belongs to the domain of perpetuity, not to the domain of time. He affirms that the intelligible things in the higher world are not subject to time, nor are they generated one after another. He states that the Universal Soul, also, does not belong to the domain of time but to perpetuity, and therefore becomes the agent of time. He declares that the active words affect things simultaneously because they do not occur in time, while the receptive words do not receive everything all at once, but one after another.² He believes that the soul

occurs in time. Motion with respect to itself occurs in time essentially, and insofar as it is existent, it is in perpetuity, as with time itself' (*Qabasāt*, p. 93).

1. Mir Dāmād has shown through the preceding quotations how the theory of three containers of existence was developed by Ibn Sīnā and his philosophical successors. Mir Dāmād will now give evidence for the nature of the domain of perpetuity from a book known as the *Theology of Aristotle*, erroneously ascribed to Aristotle but actually a paraphrase from the *Enneads* of Plotinus. See Jill Kraye, et al, ed., *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts*. (London, 1986) for the origins of this work in Arabic.

2. 'Alawī explains that the 'active words' refer to the incorporeal intelligences, which are actualized by the existential Command 'Be!' without the intermediary of any matter, while the 'receptive words' refer to receptive essences (*dhawāt*) belonging to the world of souls (*Sharḥ al-*

is a circle having no dimensions between its centre and its circumference, and that the intellect is a circle which does not move, while the soul is a circle which moves motivated by its desire for something.

Wamḍah [1.4]

Since you recognize that eternity (*sarmad*) transcends perpetuity (*dahr*), and perpetuity transcends time (*zamān*), know that if the temporal non-existence belonging to a certain temporal thing, insofar as it is temporal, is posited to be continuous for the whole extension of time, then without a doubt its perpetual real non-existence is necessitated as well. Otherwise, it would be necessary for that temporal thing to be existent in the domain of perpetuity, not in time, and it would then be among the entities separated (*mufāraqāt*) from time and space, which is contrary to its assumed temporality. But if its non-existence is particularized to only a part of the extension of time in its particularity, its non-existence in perpetuity is certainly not necessary. In this case, would not its subject (*ma'rūd*) be existent in what is outside of the time of its non-existence belonging to time? Perpetuity is more encompassing and more universal than any part of time, than the extension of the whole of time, and than the domain of the real world separated from the dimensions of time and space.

Analogous to this is the stage of the quiddity (*māhiyyah*) itself, as itself, in relation to concrete entities (*ḥāqq al-a'yān*) and the sphere of the thing itself (*nafs al-amr*).¹ For just as non-existence in the stage of the substance of the quiddity, insofar as it is itself,² does not require non-existence in the actual thing itself, and

qabasāt, p. 121). The intelligences have no matter, composition, or potentiality, and they are unable to change, become multiple, or choose freely. They are strictly transcendent forms (Ibid. 132).

1. Sajjādi explains: 'The term *nafs al-amr* refers to the boundary (*ḥadd*) of the essence (*dhāt*) of each thing' (*Farhang-i 'ulūm-i 'aqlī*, 596).

2. 'Alawī comments: 'He means non-existence in the sense of the [simple] negation of existence from it [the quiddity], for the application of non-existence to the quiddity does not necessitate its subsistence (*thubūt*) in it, such that it would preclude the quiddity, insofar as it is itself, from being anything but itself, for the intention here is the non-subsistence of its accidents in its own stage. ...To express this another way, neither of the extremes of the two contradictories [i.e., existence and non-existence] belongs to the quiddity by reason of itself. This is the correct meaning, which does not imply that the quiddity lacks one of these two, for it is possible that it may not lack one of them by reason of something outside itself.' (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, pp. 139–140). The point is that the existence of contingent entities is distinct from their quiddities, even though quiddity and existence are inseparable in the state of actualization. If it is accepted that possible realities are receptive of both existence and non-existence, then both existence and non-existence must be other than the quiddity as itself. A quiddity cannot receive what it already has as an essential constituent. Therefore, if it does not exist actually but remains possible, it has 'received' non-existence, while if it does exist actually, it has 'received' existence. In both cases, it has received one of these contradictories in a manner analogous to a subject receiving an accident from outside. Existence and non-existence, therefore, are necessary accidents of the quiddity, but neither one is an essential constituent of it. The same applies to the quiddity being universal or particular.

does not conflict with existence in the world of objective reality—even though that stage is one of the modes of the thing itself, not a fabricated aspect, because the thing itself is more encompassing and more universal than that stage and than the stage of concrete actuality,¹ as a result of which it is possible for existence to be excluded in that stage [of the quiddity] in its particularity, but not excluded [from it] in the real world—in like manner, the non-existence belonging to a temporal thing in a part of time does not require its non-existence in perpetuity, due to the fact of its temporal existence in perpetuity not in that time. Furthermore, the non-existence of an immaterial entity (*al-shay' al-mufāraq*) in the whole extension of time does not require its non-existence in perpetuity, nor does it conflict with its perpetual existence in objective reality and the actual world not in any time or place at all. Therefore, it is possible for the existence of something to be removed from a part of time, but it cannot be removed in perpetuity from the whole extension of time; or it can be removed from the whole extension of time [in the case of separate, incorporeal things], but not removed in the domain of perpetuity from actual reality.

Is it not clear to you that the unqualified nature (*al-ṭabī'ah al-mursalāh*) is realized through the realization of any individual among its individuals, and it is not negated except through the negation of all its individuals? The affirmative (*mūjab*) of the unqualified propositions (*mursalāt al-'uqūd*) is in the power of a particular affirmative, and their negative is in the power of a universal negative. Therefore, it is clear that the temporal non-existences belonging to changeable and corruptible things, insofar as they are changeable and corruptible, only refer to the absence of a particular existent, which exists for a definite duration within the extension of time, from other than the time of its [temporal] existence, not to its absence in perpetuity from the whole of time; and they refer to the absence of a temporal from another temporal [extension], not its absence from the One Who is exalted above the dimensions of time and space, and Who encompasses all times and all places, and what is in them and with them, in all their details, with an eternal, unchanging, unquantifiable relation, and through a law which subsists equally and unchanging.

Wamīd [1.4.1]

It can be summed up from all of this that the true Creator and Necessary Being (lauded be He), in all His aspects and attributes, exists in the domain of eternity

1. In other words, each temporal is simultaneously in some respect in perpetuity and in time. The thing itself (*nafs al-amr*), therefore, transcends any of its aspects, such as its quiddity, its particular incorporeal nature, and its particular temporal reality. 'Alawī, comments: 'This conceptual stage [of the quiddity] and likewise the intelligence and the external reality (*al-khārij*) are all dimensions [lit. 'containers'] of the thing itself. Therefore, it is more encompassing than them, in the same way that perpetuity [is more encompassing than time and than the real world that transcends time]' (*Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, p. 141).

(*sarmad*), not in time, and not in perpetuity (*dahr*). Nay, He is exalted above both of them and sanctified from their concomitants, their affections, their properties, and their laws. He is the ever-living, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.

The immutable substances, insofar as they have attributes and affections consisting of obligatory and supererogatory perfections, exist in perpetuity, and not in eternity nor in time in any respect whatsoever.

The changeable things subject to flux, elapsing, and renewal, insofar as they are changing, only exist in time, and not in eternity or perpetuity. In this respect, they have absolutely no share of existence in perpetuity. But insofar as each of them exists unchanging during its time, its realization never vanishing during the time of its existence, since the time of the existence of something, by natural necessity, cannot be the same as the time of its non-existence, then, from this point of view, they exist in perpetuity, and not in eternity or in time. Let it be established.

Mīr Findiriskī

Although little is known about the life of Sayyid Amīr Abu'l-Qāsim Mīr Findiriskī,¹ it is certain that he was one of the major figures in the School of Isfahan when Mullā Ṣadrā was studying there. Some have also claimed that Mīr Findiriskī was one of Mullā Ṣadrā's teachers but that is not certain. Mīr Findiriskī was born around 970/1562 in Mashhad and died around 1050/1640 in Isfahan where he was buried. His tomb in Takht-i Fūlād cemetery is a well-known site in that city. While not much is known about his teachers, he must have benefited from the available Peripatetic masters in Khurasan at the time since later on he became a master of Peripatetic philosophy in his own right, and was particularly knowledgeable concerning the works of Ibn Sīnā. He also taught the latter's medical work *al-Qānūn* (The Canon) along with his philosophical encyclopedia, *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing).

Mīr Findiriskī's diverse interests ranged from philosophy and alchemy to comparative religion and mysticism. The latter two perhaps account for his many travels to India, where he studied Hindu philosophy and religious traditions and commented upon several works that were translated from Sanskrit into Persian, including notes on the Persian translation of the *Mahābhārata* (the *Razm-nāmah*) and commentary on the *Yoga-Vāsīṣṭhā*.

One of the most fascinating and enigmatic figures of the School of Isfahan, Mīr Findiriskī gained prominence not only as a result of his scholarly output but also to some extent from his intellectual impact upon the philosophical circles in India. He created effectively a bridge between the Indian intellectual world and the School of Isfahan. He was also familiar with the Zoroastrian circle of the disciples of Ādhar Kaywān. A number of Mīr Findiriskī's associates, including Ḥakīm Dastūr Iṣfahānī who, in 1054/1644–1645, espoused the cause of the unity of religions, and Ḥakīm Kāmran Shīrāzī who, in 1050/1640–1641, referred to Mīr Findiriskī as his 'brother',

1. His full name was Sayyid Amīr Abu'l-Qāsim ibn Mīrzā Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Astarābādī.

also became deeply involved in comparative philosophical and religious studies between Islam and Hinduism.

Mīr Fındıriskī continues to be a much neglected figure: most of his works remain unpublished and the authorship of many works attributed to him is still unauthenticated. Works attributed to him include a unique treatise on alchemy, *Fī ḥaqīqat al-wujūd* (On the Reality of Existence), *Fī irtibāṭ al-ḥādīth bi'l-qadīm* (On the Relationship of the Created to the Eternal), *Fī'l-maḳūlāt al-'ashrah* (On the Ten [Aristotelian] Categories) and *Fī'l-ḥarakah* (On Motion). This last work undertakes a discussion of Aristotle's proof for the Unmoved Mover. Despite his numerous works and cultural achievements, Mīr Fındıriskī's name is most often associated with his major work *Risālah-yi šinā'īyyah* (Treatise on the Arts) which is unique in the annals of Persian philosophical literature in that it is perhaps the first treatise in that tradition to deal philosophically with an examination of the arts and professions in an ideal society. Mīr Fındıriskī was also an accomplished poet and is the author of one of the most famous *qaṣīdahs* in the Persian language, a *qaṣīdah* that deals with the principles of his philosophical vision.

Mīr Fındıriskī, like many other great masters of the School of Isfahan, was interested in reconciling discursive reasoning with Shi'ī gnostic thinking. Similar to his contemporary, Mīr Dāmād, Mīr Fındıriskī rejected the notion of *naskh* (abrogation of an earlier injunction), relying instead on both reason and transmitted narrations from Imams. Among the more unique aspects of Mīr Fındıriskī's thought was his ambivalent view of Platonic archetypes, which was almost unique among his contemporaries. Proposing a form of nominalism, Mīr Fındıriskī argued that existents owe their existence not to a higher plane of reality but to their direct cause; that is why he assigned the question of creation to the field of physics rather than metaphysics. In line with a strict Aristotelian view, Mīr Fındıriskī indicated in his response to a contemporary scholar, Muẓaffar Ḥusayn Kāshānī, that essence (*māhiyyah*) does not lend itself to gradations and we cannot refer to essences as 'more or less'.

One of the most neglected areas of study in Islamic philosophy is the tradition of philosophical poetry to which Mīr Fındıriskī and many of his contemporaries belonged. His poems include the long philosophical ode or *qaṣīdah* already mentioned. It was written as a response to a poem of Nāṣir-i Khusraw where Mīr Fındıriskī follows the poetic metric and rhythm style of this Ismaili thinker and poet in the structure of his own poem in which he discusses the subject of the archetypes.

Like many great masters, Mīr Fındıriskī trained a number of students in Isfahan including Mullā Ḥusayn Khwānsārī (d. 1098/1686–1687), who wrote glosses on the metaphysics of the *Shifā'*; Mīrzā Muḥammad Rafī'ī Ṭabāṭabā'ī Nā'inī (d. 1082/1671–1672); Rajab-'Alī Tabrīzī (d. 1080/1669–1670), to whom we have devoted a chapter in this volume; and the jurist-philosopher, Muḥammad-Bāqir Sabzawārī (d. 1098/1686–1687).

Although while in Isfahan, Mīr Findiriskī taught Peripatetic texts, he was also a mystic and a practising alchemist. His personality was wrapped in a shroud of mystery and he was even said to have performed miracles including being in two places at the same time.

This chapter includes sections from one of the most important works of Mīr Findiriskī, *Risālah-yi šinā'īyyah* (Treatise on the Arts). Here he relies on a general Platonic view of society and, using the human body as a metaphor of perfection, he goes on to argue how an ideal society can be constructed using the human model. He is particularly concerned about the classification of professions, arts, and sciences since harmony and balance in a society is restored when all professions and parts of a society fulfil the function for which they were created, like the healthy human body.

M. Aminrazavi

TREATISE ON THE ARTS

Risālah-yi šinā'īyyah

Translated for this volume by Ahmad Kazemi-Moussavi from Mīr Abu'l-Qāsim Astarābādī Findiriskī, *Risālah-yi šinā'īyyah*, ed. Ḥasan Jamshīdī (Mashhad, 1384 Sh./2006) pp. 2–26.

Praise be to Allah, may [we commence] by His might and strength, and may God bless the Prophet Muḥammad and his household.

The purpose of this treatise is to delineate the extent of the arts [or professions] and their benefits. The variety of benefits brings about the hierarchy of arts, encourages man to pursue one suitable for him, and [encourages him] to avoid low benefit and the less honoured professions. This treatise illustrates that professions are practically limited but potentially unlimited; the subject of some professions becomes the purpose of other professions until there becomes a profession that has no purpose beyond itself.

Chapter One

In Exposition of the Definition of Profession (šinā'at)

The definition of profession should be dealt with first so that everyone may know what profession is by its manifestation, and that is called *šinā'at* or *pīshah* in Darī Persian. But, before dealing with the definition of profession, we should explain the meanings of its components, since the knowledge of a singular (*mufrad*) is prior to the knowledge of a compound (*murakkab*).

We say: The term 'power' (*quwwah*) is a homonym word, imparting several meanings. By 'power' we mean a course by which things become either an active agent (*fā'il*) or a passive one (*munfa'il*). By *fā'il*, we indicate the one from whom action emanates, and by *munfa'il* we refer to the one who gets affected. Thus, both active and passive agents are united in their objects, but adhere to different definitions. By 'scrutiny' (*im'ān*, see below), we mean to make fast and to stand firm.

The term 'subject' (*mawḍū'*) distinguishes the active agent (*fā'il*) from whom it owes the confirmation of its particular use, be it in practice, such as wood which is the object of a carpenter, [who] carries out the particular use of wood by turning the wood into a 'door' and 'window', or in theory, such as the object of sciences which are obvious.

By 'sound thought' (*fikr-i ṣaḥīḥ*), we mean a consciousness that does not negate the purpose [of a work] [but] rather confirms it. 'Purpose with limited scope'

(*gharaḍ maḥdūd al-dhāt*) applies to a purpose whose invalidation is not equal to invalidation of the 'purpose in relation to active agent'.

Knowing the meanings of the components of 'profession', we now turn to its definition and say: 'profession is the acting power of scrutiny on an object with a sound thought aiming at a purpose with limited scope.'

Thus 'power', in this definition, is akin to a genre comprising [the power of both] disciple and master; but by the term 'acting', [this power] is distinguished from the power of disciples, and by the term 'scrutiny' it is discerned from 'unsteady powers' called 'subtle states'. The phrase 'in a subject', separates it from the power of laughter and weeping, which are embodied in the human being, but do not have a clear object to serve the purpose of proving their essential situation. The phrase 'with a thought' separates [this power] from natural powers, such as the power of fire that burns. By the term 'sound', a thought is separated from the polemics of sophists who negate the purpose. By the phrase 'aiming at a purpose with limited scope', it is differentiated from the persuasion of polemicists, who do not have a purpose with limited scope. Both the purposes of 'proving' or 'negating' are equal to the sophists. Should their adversary attempt to prove something, they would negate it, and vice versa.

This is the definition of the nature of 'profession' and its explanation. Praise be to God the Grantor of life and intellect.

Chapter Two

The Benefit of Professions

Almighty God bestowed upon His creatures whatever excellences (*kamālāt*) possible for them at the beginning of creation. Whatever excellences they possibly achieve after creation are due to their movement and longing (*shawq*). Causes of the secondary excellences were also created by Him. The Qur'ān describes these two phases: 'He Who gave to each created thing its form, then guided it' (20:50) The prime premise of the secondary excellences is either nature, senses, or intellect (*aql*) and whose meanings are cited in books.

Some creatures have only the first premise [i.e. the nature] and they are vegetations. Some of them combine the first and second premises [i.e. nature and senses] and they are irrational animals. Some of them combine all three premises [i.e. nature, sense and intellect] and they are rational (*nāṭiq*) animals.

The basis of the action of nature and senses aims primarily at regulating their own status. This is the particular and partial, which is the status of nature, and defers from the general feature. Secondly, the mode of species (*niẓām-i naw'*) applies to nature and senses. Thirdly, the universal (*kull*) has a ratio of 'intellectual unity' [combining] all [elements] together.

This book is not the place to elaborate upon these concepts. The essential prerequisite of intellect is different from this, that is to say, the first function of

intellect is to regulate the universal, and no partiality and particularity are the prime purpose of the intellect. No particularity can be singled out without another particularity. It should be understood that intellect is all in actuality, not potentially. That which is in all things potentially is called prime matter (*hayūlā*). The second purpose of the intellect is to regulate rational species. The third purpose is to regulate rational person. The highest appreciation of nature and senses are when the third purpose of their work is considered to be as their first purpose. This is the state of their restitution with intellect which is the highest stage. The highest depreciation of the power of intellect is when the third purpose becomes its first purpose. This is the decline of the intellect to the stage of senses which constitutes the lowest stage there being distanced from all. The Qur'ān alludes to these three stages in several verses with words such as 'the vanguard of Islam' (*al-sābiqūn*) (19:100), the companions of the right (56:27) and the companions of the left hand (56:41).

Among all creatures, the human being particularly possesses all of the three powers, and verily the human's special formation is due to intellect. We said that the first purpose of intellect is to regulate the universal, the second to regulate species (*naw'*) and the third to regulate person; none of which may be realized without merging them together (*ijtimā'*). Since there would not be humankind if 'person' did not exist, a particular out of general would not come about should species not exist and, in such a case 'general' would not be on its order. It is impossible for a person to exist without cooperation of his human kind, because each person is in need of food, drink, clothing and a household which must all be acquired. To obtain each of these, helpers are needed in the first, second, and third place and so on until it reaches to nature. For example, we need a baker for making bread. The baker needs the woodcutter and the miller, and each of them [in turn] requires helpers. For example the miller needs the farmer, and the farmer needs the tools of sowing, such as a spade and a plow, which are made by a blacksmith.

It is not the purpose of this book to elaborate on which professions are needed and how many professions are out there. Thus, it is recognized that each person owes his survival to many elements, without their assistance [the life] of a person would not be in proper order. There would not be human kind if there were no human person; and the universal would be out of order if there were no human kind. No one thought that the person is the cause of species and that the species is the cause of the order of universal.

This proof is 'demonstration of fact' (*burhān-i innī*), which is closer than senses to us. We now turn to further examination.

A 'demonstration of the cause' (*burhān-i limmī*) is when we say the human being must exist, since the universal is required to be in order, due to the universal order which is intellect. The human person should exist because the human species should exist. Thus intellect is the cause of the species, and when the species exist,

the human person comes to existence in the way of the 'possible' (*mumkin*). Thus, intellect is verily the cause of species, and species are the cause of the person in the way of possible (*mumkin*), which is profession. The possessors of these professions are like functionaries which we have already elaborated in examples. Each of these functionaries has a particular object, such as the flour that a baker mixes to make the specific formation of bread. The baker does so according to his firm power and ability, which is his knowledge of bakery, deriving from his sound awareness [bestowed upon him] according to the universal order. This power and ability has a defined purpose, which is to nourish with the bread. Thus, we elaborated the benefit and necessity of professions by way of senses and reason. Peace be upon the one who follows guidance.

Chapter Three

The Urge for Acquiring Professions and for Admonishing

People of Idleness

It is understood that man is microcosm and the world is macrocosm. This is not the place to elaborate on this question. All organs of the human body need each other, and no organ is useless. Should an organ not function properly the task of other parts would be void or deficient, or partly void and partly deficient. In such cases, the health of the person would deteriorate, and he should be treated and cured as much as possible. If the organ is not curable and has no use, it will be considered as non-existent. Likewise every person in the world, which is the major human [microcosm], is like a special organ which has a task. Thus if he does not fulfil his task, it would be similar to a corrupt member that causes a defect to the whole universe.

Thus the major human, which is the cosmos, should find the decadence (*fasād*) and try to remove it with his Universal Intellect (*'aql-i kullī*). He should cut the rotten part entirely off if its decadence is contagious like leprosy; either it should be treated with painful medicines as physicians do through cauterizing, opening the vein, bandaging, and giving bitter medicine, or paid no attention and discounted as a blind eye or deaf ear, or like body hair which serves neither for ornament nor for preservation.

[In a social context], the example of the first [category] is atheists who call [people] to unbelief, idleness, and libertinism (*ibāḥāt*). The Universal Ordainer (*mudabbir-i kull*) [of the world] wills their deliverance through the power of kings and jurisprudents (*mujtahids*), both of whom are essential elements of the universe.

Examples of the second category are dissolute and idle people who do not engage themselves in work, and are corrected by the force and punishment of kings and muftis. They would be punished finally with amputation and with death if they

rebel again. They would fit into the first category should the dissolute and idleness culminate.

Examples of the third are the disabled, blind, chronically ill, and fools who are not fit to work, and contemptibly have no portion of the riches of the world. The Director of the Universe rewards everyone according to their striving. 'Man has nothing but what he strives for' (53:39).

Examples of the fourth category are the antinomian (*qalandarān*), wandering dervishes and self-indulgent individuals who do not work and are as worthless and futile as body hairs. It is sometimes legally permissible to eliminate them just as one would cleanse the body. For this reason, philosophers and sages stipulate 'reward and punishment', since the wrath of God Almighty is based on justice and measurement, not on revenge or retaliation from both of which He is devoid. Plato says: 'God Almighty created the world and provided a rational order for it. Whoever fears what was ordered for him verily will resist, and whoever resists merits measurement, which is punishment.' We would be beyond the purpose of this book should we elaborate on this issue. Based on the order of universe, species, and persons, it is necessary for all people to strive for a profession according to their aptitudes. Whoever refuses to do so deserves, as we said, the wrath and punishment of God Almighty.

Abu'l-Faraj Hindawī Qummī¹ mentioned [in his work] that in the old times, when drawing pictures and images was customary in religions, the picture of Mercury was drawn to stand for professions and works, and the picture [of a woman was drawn] to stand for chance and fortune, which represents idleness and redundancy.

Chance (*bakht*) appears in the image of a blind woman sitting on a buoy, holding the rudder of a ship. Mercury appears in image of a handsome and bright young man sitting on a cubic stone. Chance was drawn in the image of a woman whose blindness points to her ignorance and silliness. Sitting on a buoy indicates the disorder of her works and her lack of stability. The rudder of a ship was given to a woman to typify the risk of those who relegate their work to chance, and expose themselves to fear and death. How can a blind woman be a sailor, how safe is sitting on the buoy? Even if one survives, the shame of the sailor remains.

Mercury, who represents profession, appears as a cheerful young man to indicate the hope of prosperity of craftsmen. His brightness proves that his affairs are run with vision, as he sees the consequences, and the cubic stone beneath him refers to the stability of his work. This much is enough for the quest of profession and admonishing idleness.

1. It was not possible for us to ascertain the identity of this author and his work with certainty. Among the Hindawī family who resided in Qom, we know Abu'l-Faraj 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn Hindū (d. 455/1063) who wrote *al-Kalām al-ruḥāniyyah min al-ḥikmah al-yūnāniyyah* (Cairo, 1318/1900) and *Miftāḥ al-ṭibb wa minḥāj al-ṭullāb* (Tehran, 1368 Sh./1989).

Chapter Four

The Variety of Professions: Decency and Vulgarly of Works and Workers

Some professions are useful and necessary, and some are of use but not necessary. Some of them are inherently good and some are good by accident (*bi'l-'araḍ*). By useful, we mean it should produce goodness, and by necessary, we mean that it would be impossible to proceed to good without it. By absolute good, here, we mean that the human is enacting its ultimate goal directly. By accidental good, the very profession is the ultimate goal and the beneficiary is the worker only. In other words, some professions are of many benefits and some are of little benefit; some are complementary to the function of nature and some are adorning it, and these varieties are [usually] interlocked.

An example of the first category is the ironsmith's job, the second is canal cleaning, the third is prophecy, caliphate, and philosophy and the fourth is secretarial, tailoring, and goldsmith work. The ironsmith is in service of the goldsmith and both are in service of other professions in the way of generality and particularity (*'umūm wa khuṣūṣ*). The fifth example is in the ironsmith's work that other professions need its service without its directorship. By creating it, God Almighty demonstrated His favour in His book (57:25). It is like matter (*hayulā*) for many professions.

The sixth example is hunting, snake-charming, and the like. It should be understood that the purpose of this book is not to enumerate the professions. An example is enough for each profession, though many of them share [similar characteristics]. The seventh example is medicine, veterinary medicine, and farming. The eighth example is painting and colouring.

We said that the purpose of profession is to produce general order, which is inherently good. The profession that's subject is general is prophecy, and the profession of the ironsmith is the general servant and is inherently good. God Almighty in His book referred to these two ranks, indicating that the purpose of assigning prophets is generally to discipline humankind. The following verse refers to the abundant benefits of iron: 'We sent our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the book and the balance that men may stand forth in justice; and we sent down iron in which there is great might, as well as many benefits for mankind' (57:25). None knows its interpretation save only Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge (3:7).

Other professions are medium in benefit and goodness, abundant in benefit and goodness, and short of benefit and goodness. The noblest profession is prophecy, as we have said. The least of these [noble professions] are those unnecessary professions with little benefit and use. Other professions are medium in nobility and vulgarity according to the amount of their benefit.

It is noteworthy that the term profession has many applications in the common usage other than what we defined. Thus, it is appropriate to define profession in

general with adequate varieties as much as possible and, God willing, to determine right and wrong profession and decency and vulgarity of their works in general.

Chapter Five

Definition of Profession in General

The term ‘profession’ (*ṣinā‘ah*) in a wider meaning includes the ability to act in a special subject for a particular purpose. The subject of profession in this context is either general or particular, and the purpose is either to improve, to disprove, or neither. The meaning of profession can be divided into six kinds:

The first meaning is that its subject is general and the purpose of the doer is to improve the subject, like prophecy, Imamate, expertise in jurisprudence and philosophy.

The second is that its subject is general and the purpose of doer is to disprove the subject, and this is the profession of atheists, libertines, tyrant caliphs, innovators [in religion], and sophists, whose purpose is to destroy the laws of prophecy, caliphate, jurisprudence, and philosophy upon which the order of universe is founded.

The third includes particulars, the purpose of whose doers is to improve things such as the medical profession.

The fourth applies to those whose subject is particular and whose purpose is to corrupt things, such as poisons and deadly drugs.

The fifth is that its subject is general but its purpose is neither positive nor negative, such as traditions set by great kings whose purpose was nothing but to save their own interest, either compatible with the order of the universe or in opposition to it.

The sixth is that its subject is particular and the purpose is neither good nor bad, like customs set by petit-chiefs for their own interest. Noblest of all human beings are possessors of the first profession, and the lowest among them are those engaged in the second kind of occupation, which is the contrary of the first one. Second in nobility is the third kind, and the second lowest one is the fourth kind. The purpose of the two last kinds of professions is to serve the personal interest of their incumbents, as the good of other associates are not considered. The popular purposes in profession and craft are these two kinds of jobs, as people prefer them. We will deal with them in a separate chapter.

Chapter Six

In Exposition of the Fifth and Sixth Kinds of Profession in Their General Sense

These are those whose purpose in pursuing a profession is their own self-interest, and doing harm or good for the public is not their goal. These are of three types: First—a craft established by craftsmen whose purpose is self-interest, but the best

interest of fellow Muslims,¹ and what is prudent for them (*ṣalāh-i muṭlaq*), is in it although it was not meant by the craftsmen.

Second—it results in absolute harm although it was not the purpose of the one who initiated it.

Third—it is good sometimes and harmful at other times.

The first type of the three [above mentioned propositions] will bear the same status as the first and third kinds [of the aforementioned six kinds]. The third type will be looked at as the first above kind if it acquires positive conditions, otherwise it will be included among the second kind.

The first type of this group are like animals, such as cows and sheep, as they eat and drink according to their appetite, but by accident do good to people by producing milk, meat, and by tilling the land and carrying loads. Should they not eat and drink, they could not do good to people. They look like domestic animals.

The second type looks like beasts; the stronger they get, the more harm they do. Their purpose in working is dictated by their appetite, similar to harmful animals. They, therefore, should be chased and killed as beasts. These are like thieves and scoundrels (*‘ayyārān*).²

The third category includes monkey, goat and parrot players, and dog-fanciers; whose purpose is to do good to themselves only or to benefit from their game with animals. There is sometimes benefit in their games and sometimes harm. They include entertainers (*bāzīgārān*), jugglers (*ḥuqqah-bāzān*), story-tellers, fire-eaters, mockers, and sportsmen all, of which people of the city may benefit sometimes. When people became weary of their work and it is their vacation time; times such as celebrations and days when people habitually do not work; or in the evenings when they cease working and have free time; then they enjoy and become refreshed by watching games or listening to stories, which function like sharpening tools to increase people's working energy. In the absence of these conditions, the games are rationally considered idleness. In most religions such fancies are forbidden according to the universal orders of religion and philosophy (we will explain their differences below, God willing). Holders of these jobs should be considered as 'actor and speaker animals' whose seeing and listening to them occur rarely and occasionally.

Chapter Seven

General [and] Exhaustive Division of Professions

In a more general way, the meaning of profession applies to twelve kinds. That is

1. Mīr Fīndiriskī uses *shurakā'* (lit. partners) to mean 'public', indeed, 'Muslim public'. We have translated it as 'public' or 'fellow Muslims' interchangeably.

2. *'Ayyārān* (sing. *'ayyār*) has mixed connotations in both Persian and Arabic. It has been translated as 'ruffians' as well as 'chivalrous warriors' with a positive connotation. We have chosen 'thieves' to fit into Mīr Fīndiriskī's categorization.

to say, the subject of a profession is either general or particular, and dealing with each subject and its purpose is either knowledge and practice together, or only knowledge or practice. In each of them, the goodness or viciousness of the subject depends on its purpose. These are the twelve kinds.

First kind—general subject whose topic concerns knowledge and practice (*‘ilm wa ‘amal*) both dependent on the purpose.

Second kind—general subject whose topic concerns both knowledge and practice, and its viciousness depends on the purpose.

Third kind—general subject whose topic concerns knowledge only, and its goodness depends on the purpose.

Fourth kind—general subject whose topic concerns knowledge only, and its viciousness follows the purpose.

Fifth kind—general subject whose topic concerns practice only, and its goodness depends on the purpose.

Sixth kind—general subject whose purpose concerns practice only, and its viciousness results from the purpose.

Seventh kind—particular subject whose topic concerns knowledge and practice, and its goodness results from the purpose.

Eighth kind—particular subject whose topic concerns knowledge and practice, and its viciousness results from the purpose.

Ninth kind—particular subject whose topic and purpose concern knowledge only, and its goodness results from the purpose.

Tenth kind—particular subject whose topic concerns knowledge, and its viciousness follows the purpose.

Eleventh kind—particular subject whose topic and purpose concern practice, and its viciousness results from the purpose.

Twelfth kind—particular subject whose topic concerns practice only and its viciousness results from the purpose.

Concerning the first kind, which is the profession of prophets, Imams, and philosophers; we must say it is the noblest profession, whose benefit is all-embracing due to the universality of its subject, combining knowledge and practice. The holders of these professions are akin to angels who are pure excellence. In the physical world, they are like the sun and the moon upon whom rests the order of the corporal world. Thus, they are the true humans who should lead all living things. In the management of city business they are like gold and silver, without whom justice cannot be done. They are natural kings whose death dismisses them from position, since they are the soul and the intellect of the universe upon which the order of world rests. They are universal physicians, since the *sharī‘ah* is universal medicine. But some [following] groups suffer from the *sharī‘ah*.

Infidels, blasphemers, breakers of the oath of allegiance, rebels, deviators who are holders of the second [of the above twelve professions] are subject for universal treatment. Similarly, stoning adulteresses and implementing penal law (*ḥudūd*) against the sinful is part of universal treatment (*mudāwāt-i kull*). As such a physician may treat a person by having the hidden vein opened, venesection (*ḥijāmah*), by cauterizing and feeding bitter drugs; because the general health of his body depends on his being subject to suffering from cauterizing and venesection, etc. If he abstains from doing so, the malady will spread to the whole body. The scope of execution and implementation of Islamic penal law depends on the degree of general deviation. Whenever the amount of deviation rises, the strict implementation of the law is desirable.

The religious elite would be wrong if they neglected to punish them, like a negligent physician who causes the spread of disease by his failure to eliminate the ailing part of the body. That is the reason why the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, killed a thousand and some by his hand and ordered the killing of the same number, yet he attained so excellent a position [among Muslims]. Compared with religious figures such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī [d. 110/ 728], who indulged in excess prayers, 'Alī was excellent. Ḥasan focused on the remedy of a particular weak part of the body; this was the end-purpose of his work. This amounts to nothing but self-indulgence and self-serving action. But 'Alī worked for the general good of the people by disregarding his own interest. For consideration of public interest, he often suffered and always put his life at risk, as the Qur'ānic verse reveals: 'There is type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah' (2:207). Whatever prayers, such as daily services and fasting, which the prophets ordain are like treatment and diet which physicians prescribe to their patients.

Thus, it is proven that they [prophets, Imams, and philosophers] are the noblest creatures of God on earth, since the subject of their works is universal. Almighty God made some things permissible (*mubāḥ*) for them which are not permitted for other people. Because those things are minor, if they engage them, they will lose [time for] the major. A minor thing would be entering a mosque in a state of ritual impurity (*junub*), which is forbidden for every person except prophets, Imams, and philosophers, according to a famous saying of the Prophet and Imam 'Alī. This is because the ritual ablution (*ghusl*) is a minor matter, and engaging in it could prevent them from doing thousands of worldly works they should undertake. For this reason, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'the sleep of the learned is better than the prayer of the ignorant person.'

A learned man regains strength when he sleeps, so he finds energy in his knowledge and practice from which people can benefit. Nobody benefits from the prayers of an ignorant one; he damages his health and cannot accomplish his end goal. Because he spends his time in supererogatory prayers when the sleep is necessary, he gets sick and cannot perform his obligatory prayers. Thus, prophets

are in position to excuse themselves from rules they ordain, since they have duties of more obligatory nature. That is why there is no reward for supererogatory prayers of jurists who do not make use of their knowledge. Their knowledge is more beneficiary than their action [prayer]. Their action benefits themselves, whereas their knowledge is good for whole the world, unless the action is universal in nature as are the actions of the Prophet and Imams, peace be upon him.

Chapter Eight

In Exposition of the Difference between Prophets and Philosophers

Philosophers err occasionally in both theory and practice, but prophets do not err at all. The way of knowledge and practice for philosophers is their 'thought', but the prophets' way is revelation and inspiration. They know things not by thought, which is theoretical; but rather what appears as theory for philosophers, is obvious and primary for prophets. They do not err, since error occurs in theories, not in primaries. Primaries are those propositions whose objects do not need a medium for confirmation of its predicate. They are known by the light of intellect. Wherever the light be stronger, this instinct appears more. The rational power of prophets is infinite, they do not need a medium in each [field of] knowledge. There is no veil between them and angels. The fact that they are sometimes revealed and sometimes not revealed is due to the attention or lack of attention from angels, who at times are engaged with the physical world and at times with the beyond. When they are busy with one side they cannot pay attention to the other side. At times they are engaged with the lust and anger indispensable for life and hereafter, and at times with the power of intellect. The intellectual power is so strong among them [the prophets] that the two noble senses of hearing and seeing get impressed, and their thought becomes sensible for them as their intellect conveys messages to the senses.

The philosophers have no such power to convey messages from intellect to sense. Their utmost knowledge is to reach intellect ('*aql*') via sense. They cannot move back from intellect to sense. Their senses do not have the power to embrace the effect of intellect ('*aql*') without a medium. When philosophers reach their highest level, it is the beginning of prophecy. This is the position of non-legislator (*ghayr mursal*) prophets, such as Galen and Aristotle. It is narrated [in *ḥadīth*] that 'Amr 'Āṣ' poured scorn on Aristotle in the presence of the Prophet, Peace be upon him. The Prophet, infuriated, said: 'O, 'Amr, Aristotle was a apostle but his people did not recognize it.' Nevertheless, they [philosophers] cannot be called proper prophets. There are differences as we said. The Prophet referred to Aristotle by the title of 'apostle' (*nabī*) to show his degree in knowledge. But his kind [of knowledge] is

1. 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ (d. 663), a Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, played an important role in the novice Islamic government and died as governor of Egypt in Fustat, then capital of Egypt.

different. It is based on speculation, and this [prophecy] does not need speculation. Speculation is not immune to error, while prophecy is inerrant. There are other differences to be explained later. The mere sharing in knowledge and practice is not enough to qualify someone as a prophet. The [Shi'i] Imams should be called prophets, since their knowledge has a medium, whereas prophecy occurs without a medium. This is why Galen is called sage (*hakīm*), not messenger.

Another distinction [between the two] is that prophecy and Imamate cannot be acquired, whereas philosophy is acquirable. Philosophy is acquired by man's rational effort, while prophecy is bestowed through revelation. Prophets and Imams expose theoretical knowledge categorically. They do not speak about the creation and resurrection in a specific sense. Should they speak, they would talk by way of metaphor and allegory in order to be known by the populace. In fact, they aim at another purpose. For example 'The hand of Allah is over their hands' (48:10), and 'God comes to them in canopies of clouds,' (2:210) are multi-meanings (*mutashābih*) in which [the method of] analogy (*tashbīh*) is apparent. There are other *mutashābih* verses, the meaning of which, experts know, cannot be taken in their apparent meanings, since they are against reason.

The focal point of the prophets' addresses is the common folk, and their words should benefit all. As the Prophet said, 'We, community of prophets, are ordered to speak to people within the level of their understanding.' The Prophet did not say, 'We community of people,' since all people are not assigned to address commoners. The philosophers' exposition of theoretical knowledge is particular, as they do not render the truth to commoners. They usually address their words to a particular group. Should they address their words to other groups, it would be in practice not in theory. In practical philosophy and sciences, philosophers do not particularize their words. They speak in the absolute [universal] sense, regardless of time differences which would require different actions. The amount of general divergence from justice, which is universal health (*siḥḥat-i kull*), differs by time. Philosophers disregard this and always set one rule for practices.

This is a deficiency in philosophers when compared to the prophets, peace be upon them, who, due to their power of revelation, know the limit of divergence and how to particularize their knowledge like a universal physician. A physician will not always treat a person in one manner. In a time of health, he usually advises, for sanitation, [to regulate] eating, drinking, movement and rest, sleep and work etc. But in the time of sickness, physicians prescribe differently. If the hot temperament¹ is dominant, they would prescribe cold materials to eat, and if the cold temperament prevails they would advise hot foods. If the patient has eaten fully, physicians

1. This is based on the humoral theory of disease which affects diet and groups foods in binary fashion according to their inherent humoral quality. The roots of this theory can be traced to ancient China, India, Persia and Greece. See Michael H. Logan, 'On the Hot-Cold Theory of Disease', *Medical Anthropology Newsletter*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1975), pp. 8-14.

would order starving, and if he starves, they prescribe more eating. They take into consideration the divergence of temperament. They, too, do not always stipulate the same universal premise. When it is required, they prescribe differently. Philosophers know this and call it 'practical philosophy' (*hikmat-i 'amali*). When the *kull* diverges, they do differently based on the quantity and quality of divergence. Philosophers cannot understand this, but the prophets, peace be upon them, know it.

The cause of difference in religions during history is that people who stick to old religion wrongly cease to follow the Universal Physician (*tabîb-i kull*). For example they say that Moses, peace be upon him, was a prophet and did not speak in vain; if he spoke rightly and we have been ordered to follow him, why should it be void and banned now? They do not realize that, had Moses, peace be upon him, undergone this time, he would say the same thing that Muḥammad, peace be upon him, says. Such is the proper choice for this time, as Moses' words were the proper words for that time. For this reason the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'Had Moses been alive now, he would be required to follow my religion.'

Mullā Ṣadrā

The most famous and influential philosopher of the School of Isfahan and perhaps the greatest Islamic metaphysician, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, usually known as Mullā Ṣadrā or by his honorific title, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (foremost among the theosophers), was born in Shiraz in 979/1571–1572. His father, Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā Qawāmī, was a high court official and from one of the best known noble families of Shiraz and he sought to provide the best education possible for his highly gifted son. It was in fact in Shiraz that Mullā Ṣadrā received his earliest education in the religious sciences. He was both deeply pious and philosophically minded and, moreover, had been interested in the spiritual sciences from his youth. Unable to find appropriate teachers in Shiraz for more advanced studies in those sciences, gnosis and metaphysics, the young Mullā Ṣadrā left his city of birth for the Safavid capital in Qazwin. The capital was moved to Isfahan in 1006/1597 and he also moved to that city where he received most of his philosophical training. His two main teachers were Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī, who held the position of *shaykh al-islām* of the capital and with whom he studied mostly the religious sciences, and Mīr Dāmād, the founder of the School of Isfahan, who also succeeded 'Āmilī in that position in 1030/1621 and with whom Mullā Ṣadrā studied philosophy, studying with him the works of Ibn Sīnā, Bahmanyār, Suhrawardī and Ṭūsī. Mīr Dāmād was himself a student of Mīr Fakhr al-Dīn Sammāki Astarābādī who was in turn a student of Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī. Therefore, through him, Mullā became connected to the philosophers of the School of Shiraz and the golden chain of the transmission of Islamic philosophy, a chain that is so significant because the teaching of Islamic philosophy in the traditional manner involves not only written texts but also an oral tradition that has been transmitted from one generation to the next during the past millennium.

At the time of the death of his father and also because of unfavorable conditions in Isfahan, Mullā Ṣadrā left that city and returned for a while to Shiraz. He also visited Kashan where he may have studied Sufism and gnosis with Mīrzā Ḍiā' al-Dīn Rāzī

known as *Ḍiā' al-'Urafā'*. Mullā Ṣadrā then left for retreat in the village of Kahak located near the road between Qom and Isfahan. It was in Kahak that Mullā Ṣadrā began the composition of his magnum opus, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah* (The Four Journeys). Then he returned to Shiraz where he spent the rest of his life teaching in the beautiful Khan School, founded by Allāhwirdī Khan. That school still stands and is perhaps the most outstanding Safavid architectural monument in that city.

While teaching and writing in Shiraz, Mullā Ṣadrā continued to travel within Persia to such cities as Qom and Kashan. He also performed the pilgrimage to Mecca seven times on foot. He died in Basrah in 1045/1635–1636 (according to some, in 1050/1640) during his last pilgrimage, the site of his tomb being unknown.

The writings of Mullā Ṣadrā transformed the landscape of Islamic philosophy and he also trained many students from near and far, including some from beyond the borders of Persia. Among his foremost students, who are themselves important figures in the history of philosophy in Persia, one may name Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī entitled *Fayyāḍ*, Mirzā Ḥusayn Tunakābunī and Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Bīdābādī. As for the forty some books that have survived from his pen, for the sake of classification they can be divided into two categories: those dealing primarily with the transmitted (*naqlī*) and religious sciences and those dealing mostly with the intellectual (*'aqlī*) sciences and more specifically philosophy. But because of his unitary perspective, this categorization can be misleading because these categories are not completely mutually exclusive. His *naqlī* works contain *'aqlī* elements and vice-versa.

His predominantly *naqlī* works include his monumental commentary upon the Qur'ān, the longest by an Islamic philosopher, an incomplete commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-kāfi* (The Sufficient Principles) of Kulaynī, *Asrār al-āyāt* (Mysteries of Qur'ānic Verses) and *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb* (Keys to the Invisible World). His two books *Risāla-yi si aṣl* (The Treatise of the Three Principles), his only treatise written in Persian, and *Kasr aṣnām al-jāhiliyyah* (Breaking the Idols of the Age of Ignorance), one dealing with the defence of authentic Sufism against its detractors and the other criticizing what Mullā Ṣadrā considered to be a decadent and deviant form of Sufism, must also be included in this category.

Mullā Ṣadrā's mainly *'aqlī* and philosophical works include first of all the *Asfār*, which is considered to this day in Persia to be the most advanced text of Islamic philosophy and also a major source for the history of Islamic thought. Then there is his second major philosophical opus containing a summary of his teachings, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* (Divine Witnesses). In this category one must also mention some of his shorter philosophical works such as *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād* (The Origin and the Return), *al-Ḥikmah al-'arshiyyah* (Wisdom of the Throne) and probably his last work *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir* (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations). We must also include in this category his masterly glosses upon Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of Healing) and Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*

(The Theosophy of the Orient of Light) as well as Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary upon *Kitāb al-Hidāyah* (The Book of Guidance) of Athīr al-Dīn Abharī. The latter book became his most famous text in Muslim India, where people often refer to the book itself as *Ṣadrā*.

Mullā Ṣadrā was the grand synthesizer of nearly a millennium of Islamic thought into a philosophical school that he called *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*, the transcendent theosophy or philosophy. This term had been used in Islamic philosophy and Sufism before Mullā Ṣadrā but he gave it a distinct new meaning by using it as the proper name for the school founded by him. Since then this school has taken its place among other major Islamic philosophical schools such as the *mashshā'ī* and *ishrāqī*.

Probably no Islamic philosopher had such an intimate knowledge of earlier schools of Islamic thought and certainly no one combined this historical knowledge on the level displayed by Mullā Ṣadrā with metaphysical acumen and knowledge of the highest degree. His *ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah* marks the integration of Islamic Peripatetic or *mashshā'ī* philosophy, the School of Illumination or *ishrāq*, gnosis or *'irfān* of the School of Ibn 'Arabī, schools of *kalām*, both Sunni and Shi'i, and the sapiential dimension of the Islamic religion itself as contained in the Qur'ān, *ḥadīths* of the Prophet and traditions of the Shi'i Imams. His synthesis was, moreover, based on the triple sources of *al-Qur'ān*, *al-burhān* and *al-'irfān*. This means that his epistemology was based on knowledge derived from the sources of revelation along with ratiocination and logical demonstration as well as intellectual intuition, illumination and unveiling. Not only did he not consider these paths of knowing to be contradictory, but he believed them to be complementary and in harmony with each other. This is why his works range from logic to spiritual unveiling to discussion of revealed texts in whose inner dimensions is to be found *ḥikmat*.

Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy deals with numerous issues not seen in earlier Islamic philosophy as well as new interpretations of already discussed theses. The cornerstone of his grand synthesis is the unity (*waḥdah*), principiality (*aṣālah*) and gradation (*tashkīk*) of being/existence, that is, *wujūd* and he writes that he received this truth as a gift from God bestowed upon him through illumination and unveiling. But there are also several other major doctrines which are basic to *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*. They include trans-substantial motion, or *al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*, which enabled him to provide a natural philosophy very different from that of Ibn Sīnā; the independent existence (*tajarrud*) of the imaginal world (*'ālam al-khayāl*) as an order of reality independent from the material level of existence, a doctrine that enabled him to provide a fresh philosophical explanation of eschatological realities as revealed in Islam; and the unity of the intellector and the intelligible in the act of intellection (*ittiḥād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl*), which, although mentioned by such earlier philosophers as Abu'l-Ḥasan al-'Āmirī, gained a completely new significance when considered in light of Mullā Ṣadrā's ontology.

Nor are these doctrines the only new features of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, but because of limited space it is not possible to discuss the others here.

When we use the term The School of Isfahan, we do not mean that we have only one philosophical school in mind. Certainly the School of Mullā Ṣadrā is the most significant in the School of Isfahan but there were also philosophical currents opposed to him led by such philosophers as Mullā Rajab 'Alī Tabrīzī. In fact during the latter part of the Safavid period, Mullā Ṣadrā's teachings became to a large extent eclipsed. His philosophical school was, however, revived in the Qajar period by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī. Henceforth, although opposition to Mullā Ṣadrā continued here and there, most of the great philosophers of Persia such as Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī, Āqā 'Alī Mudarris and Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī were Ṣadrian. Moreover, it was around the teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā that Islamic philosophy was revived in Persia during the Pahlavi period by such figures as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Also after the advent of the Islamic Revolution, the major revival of interest in Islamic philosophy with Mullā Ṣadrā as its main axis has continued. In recent years many of his works have appeared in new critical editions, some have been translated from Arabic into Persian and European languages, many critical studies have appeared concerning his thought, international conferences have been held on him, a foundation has been established devoted to his teachings and a journal entitled *Transcendent Philosophy*, edited by S. G. Safavi, has been created primarily for Ṣadrian studies. The founder of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, taught the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā for decades and it continues to dominate the Islamic philosophical scene in Persia to this day.

In speaking about the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā outside Persia, Muslim India must be treated separately because of his extensive influence there in contrast to the Ottoman Empire and the Arab world where he had little influence until recently, except for Iraq whose Shī'ī circles were closely bound intellectually to Persia. In Muslim India the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā began even in his own lifetime and has continued over the centuries. One need only study the holdings in manuscript libraries in the Subcontinent to discover how rich they are in manuscripts of his works. Moreover, so many of the leading Muslim thinkers of that area, from Shāh Walī Allāh of Delhi to Maḥmūd Jawnpūrī to Mawlānā 'Alī Thanwī, were deeply influenced by the master from Shiraz. Moreover, from the eleventh/seventeenth century onward, Ṣadrian philosophy has been taught in the *madrasahs* of the Subcontinent and some of his works have been translated into Urdu, including parts of the *Asfār* which were rendered into Urdu by the famous Mawlānā Abu'l-'Alā' Mawḍūdī, the founder of the Jamā'at-i Islāmī of Pakistan, in his younger days. The influence of Mullā Ṣadrā in Pakistan through the medium of English in modernized circles during the second half of the fourteenth/twentieth century must not be confused with his abiding presence in traditional circles in that land from a much earlier date.

During the past half century, interest in Mullā Ṣadrā has also grown by leaps and bounds in the West and also in much of the rest of the Islamic world. Although a few scholars such as Comte de Gobineau and Max Herten had written about Mullā Ṣadrā earlier, until the 1960s practically no one in the West, even among students of Islamic philosophy, knew much about him. Then Corbin and I began to write about him in French and English and since then Ṣadrian studies have continued to grow in the West and also in certain Islamic countries especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey. Translations of his writings continue especially into French and English and independent works about his thought do not cease from seeing the light of day. Numerous articles devoted to Mullā Ṣadrā also appear continuously, not only in *Transcendent Philosophy*, but also in many other learned journals in Western languages as well in Islamic languages such as Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, Indonesian and Malay in which both the number of books and articles on Ṣadrian studies has been increasing continuously.

There is no doubt that Mullā Ṣadrā is now a central figure in the field of Islamic philosophical studies in both East and West. He is not of historical interest only, but is a living philosophical voice of great significance in contemporary Islamic intellectual life. His influence continues unabated and only grows with the passage of time as his ideas become better known globally.

We have included selections from three of Mullā Ṣadrā's major texts: his magnum opus, *al-Asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah* (The Four Intellectual Journeys); *al-Mashāʾir* (Metaphysical Penetrations); and *Ittiḥād al-ʿāqil waʾl-maʿqūl* (Unification of the Intellector and the Intellected).

Our selection from *The Four Intellectual Journeys* is from the first volume which deals with metaphysics where Mullā Ṣadrā elaborates on the definition of philosophy and its primary divisions, its goal and its nobility. He says that the seekers of truth are embarked upon four journeys, the first of which is going from creation to the Truth. The chapter continues with the question of being and its primary parts, the subject of Divine science and its primary impression upon the soul and the definition of the soul. The question of the soul's descent from its Holy Abode, determination of the category to which motion belongs and Mullā Ṣadrā's unique response that motion occurs in the category of substance (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*) are treated next. This chapter concludes with a discussion refuting what Ibn Sinā and others have said to the effect that the coming-to-be of substantial forms is not by motion alone.

The second chapter of this section is devoted to Mullā Ṣadrā's major work, *Kitāb al-Mashāʾir*, where he responds to doubts concerning the objectivity of essence. It is written in the form of a series of questions and answers and contains numerous references to major philosophers and their texts which is important from a historical point of view and also shows Mullā Ṣadrā's remarkable erudition. At the heart of this chapter is a discussion on the contention between the principality

of existence versus essence. The chapter continues with a discussion concerning the manner in which quiddity is qualified and what causes particularization of individual existences and their ipseity.

In the final chapter, we have included Mullā Ṣadrā's treatise entitled *Ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa'l-ma'qūl* which deals with the unity of the intellector, and the intelligible. The chapter contains a discussion concerning the following problems: on the degrees of the theoretical intellect in tandem with the view of Alexander of Aphrodisias; an examination of the method proposed to expound upon God's knowledge of contingent beings and to repudiate the objection against the unification of the intellector and the intelligible particularly as discussed by Ibn Sīnā. How the intellect is the *intelligibilia* and that in its intellection of something it is united with the active intellect, are discussed next. This chapter ends with a discussion on how the ancients believed that the soul intellects things through its unification with the Active Intellect.

S. H. Nasr

THE FOUR INTELLECTUAL JOURNEYS

al-Asfār al-‘aqliyyah al-arba‘ah

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār al-‘aqliyyah al-arba‘ah* (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), part 1, pp. 2–17; 20–27 and part 3, pp. 75–107; 355–367.

You should know that the seekers, among the knowers and the saints, are embarked upon four journeys.

The first of these is from creation to the Truth; the second is through the Truth in the Truth; the third is the reverse of the first, or from the Truth to creation through the Truth; and the fourth is the reverse of the second in a sense, since it is through the Truth in the creation.

Accordingly, I have divided my book, in conformity with their movements in (their) lights and effects, into four journeys and called it the ‘transcendental wisdom’ of the ‘intellectual journeys’. Thus, I will elaborate on the subject, seeking the help of the Truth, the Object of Worship, the Everlasting, and the Existent.

Volume One: Of General Matters or Metaphysics in the Broadest Sense

From the creation to the Truth, or investigating the nature of existence and its essential attributes. It consists of [three] courses:

The first course, or those cognitions which man requires in all the sciences. It consists of an introduction and six stages.

Introduction

The Definition of Philosophy and its Primary Divisions, its Goal and its Nobility

You should know that philosophy is the way in which the human soul is fulfilled through the knowledge of the realities of existing entities, as they are, and the way in which their existence is judged truly by means of demonstrative proofs, rather than conjecture and imitation, according to human capacity. If you wish, we might say ordering the world rationally according to human capacity, so that man might imitate the Lord, may He be exalted.¹

Now since man has come to be as a mixture of two elements, a conceptual form issuing from the world of (Divine) Command and a sensuous, created matter; and since his soul has two aspects, concreteness and abstractness, no wonder Wisdom

1. Cf. Plato's definition of philosophy in *Theaetetus*, 176 B.

has contrived, according to the double origination, to re-form the two faculties into two parts, theoretical or abstractive and practical or prudential.

As for the theoretical, its aim is to impress the soul with the form of being, with all its order, perfection and completeness, and to become an intelligible world analogous to the concrete world, not with respect to its matter, but rather with respect to its form, its design, shape and impression.

This part of wisdom is that which was sought by the Master of the Messenger¹ in his petition to his Lord, when he said: 'Lord, show us the things as they are'; and also by the Friend (of God),² when he asked: 'Lord, grant me right judgment' (26:83), judgment here being the assent to the existence of things, entailing their conception also.

The fruit of the practical part of wisdom, on the other hand, is the performance of good deeds, in order to achieve the soul's habit of domination of the body and the body's habit of subservience and submission to the soul. It is to this part that the Prophet has referred in his saying: 'Cultivate the moral traits of God', and Abraham called on God in these words: 'And allow me to join the righteous' (26:83). It is also to both these parts of wisdom that the Divine Codex³ has referred [in the verse]: 'We have created man in the best of forms', which is the model of the World of Command, 'then we abased him to the lowest ebb, (95:4–5) which is his matter, consisting of dark and thick substances, 'except for those who have believed', a reference to the consummation of theoretical wisdom, and doing 'the righteous deeds' (95:6), a reference to the perfection of practical wisdom. It was actually in allusion to the fact that what counts, with respect to the perfection of the practical faculty, is the proper ordering of our livelihood and salvation upon resurrection, on the one hand, and what counts with respect to the theoretical on the other hand, is the knowledge of the conditions of birth and resurrection, and reflection upon what lies in between, in point of true speculation and deliberation, that the Prince of the Faithful⁴ has said: 'May God have mercy on one who has taken care of himself, prepared for his grave, and acquired knowledge of wherein and whereto' he is destined. It is also to those two arts that the metaphysical philosophers have alluded when they said, in emulation of the prophets (may God greet them), that philosophy is a mode of imitating the Deity,⁵ as was also mentioned in the prophetic tradition:⁶ 'Cultivate the moral traits of God', meaning in your cultivation of cognitions and shunning corporeal traits.

The nobility of wisdom can also be known from other numerous directions, one of which is that it is the cause of the existence of things in the most perfect

1. That is, the Prophet Muḥammad, followed by the usual blessing, May God bless and greet him.

2. That is Abraham, nicknamed in the Qur'ān also as al-Khalil.

3. That is the Qur'ān, called here *ṣaḥīfah*.

4. That is, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the first Shi'i Imam.

5. That is, Plato and his followers.

6. Usual prophetic greeting here.

manner; indeed the cause of the essence of being. For were being, as it is in itself, not known, it would not be possible to bring it into being or generating it. Being is pure good and there is nothing noble other than existential goodness. This is the meaning hinted at in the words of God, may He be exalted: 'he who receives wisdom has received an abundant goodness' (2:269). It is in this sense also that God has called Himself wise in numerous passages of His glorious Book, which is 'a revelation from a wise and praiseworthy One' (41:42), and attributed wisdom to His prophets and saints and called them godly and wise men, conversant with the truths of essences, in these words: 'When God made His covenant with the prophets, [He said]: I have indeed given you a book and wisdom' (3:81). He also said especially in reference to Luqmān: 'We have indeed imparted wisdom to Luqmān' (31:11). All this was said in the context of benefaction and gratitude; for a wise man has no other meaning than one who possesses wisdom, as already defined, and which cannot be denied. It is clearly manifest that there is nothing nobler than the Adorned Lord and His messengers who guide us to the clearest paths, all of whom have been described by God as wise.

It is thus clearly shown in what sense [wisdom's] nobility and glory consist; therefore we must follow the milestones of its ups and downs; so let us then freely offer parcels of it, give a sample thereof and advance towards laying down its principles and rules and summarizing its arguments and proofs, as best we can; joining together various fragments imparted to us from the Highest Principle. For the keys of favour are in God's keeping and He grants them to whomsoever he wishes.

First Stage: Of Being and its Primary Parts, including a Number of Paths

First (Path): Of the Conditions of Being per se, in a Number of Chapters

Chapter One

The Subject-matter of Divine Science¹ and its Primary Impression Upon the Soul

You should know that man may be described as one or many, universal or particular, in act or in potentiality. He may also be described as equal to something, smaller or bigger than it; and he may be described as moving or at rest, hot or cold, and so on. However, a thing cannot be described by an intermediate of these attributes, except insofar as it has a magnitude; and it cannot be described by what corresponds to its limit, except insofar as it possesses a matter capable of transformation. However, in order to be one or many, it does not require to become mathematical or physical; but insofar as it exists, it is susceptible to being described as one or many and what goes therewith. Accordingly, just as mathematical entities have their own attributes and properties, which are investigated in the mathematical sciences of astronomy,

1. Or metaphysics.

geometry, arithmetic and music; and just as physical entities have their own essential attributes which are investigated in the science of physics, with its many parts, the same is true of being, as such, which has its own essential attributes that are investigated in the metaphysical sciences. The subject of metaphysics, then, is absolute being, and its questions turn either on the investigation of the ultimate causes of every caused existent, such as the First Cause, who is the source of every caused existent, insofar as it is caused; or on the attributes of being as such; or finally the subjects of the other particular sciences, since the subject-matter of the other sciences is like the essential attributes of this science. It will appear clearly to you from our method of prosecuting the discussions of being, which are the essence of the scope¹ of the divine secrets, that essences constitute the primary essential attributes of the reality of being, just as unity and plurality and other universal concepts constitute the essential attributes of the concept of being, as such. It follows that the subject-matter of the other sciences are accidental attributes with respect to the First Philosophy.²

In general, this science, due to its utmost nobility and scope, investigates the conditions of being as such, and its primary divisions. Therefore, absolute being must be self-evident and in no need of definition or affirmation, or else it would not be the subject matter of the general science. Moreover, designation is either by definition or description,³ and both alternatives are impossible with respect to being. In the first case, because [definition] is by genus and *differentia*, and being, which is the most general entity, has no genus and no *differentia*, and accordingly admits of no definition. In the second case, because [description] is a form of designation by reference to what is better known, and nothing is better known than being. Thus, whoever seeks to explain being by reference to things which are more manifest than it would be in grave error.

Now, if being admits of no definition, it will not admit of demonstration either, because definition and demonstration have common terms, as was shown in the Balance.⁴ Just as some modes of assent cannot be understood unless we understand many other things prior to them, such as when we wish to know that reason exists, we need in the first place to acquire other modes of assent, leading necessarily to an assent which is not preceded by another assent, but is self-evident, primary and manifest to reason in itself; such as saying a thing is a thing, the thing is other than its opposite and two opposites cannot co-exist or cease to exist simultaneously in reality. The same is true of conception;⁵ for if a certain conception requires a prior

1. I read *madar* for *dar* here.

2. Another term for metaphysics or the 'Divine science'.

3. In definition (*ḥadd*) the essential, whereas in a description (*rasm*), the accidental attributes are given.

4. That is, logic.

5. *Taṣawwur*, as distinct from assent (*taṣdīq*) in logic.

conception, it does not follow that this is true of every conception, since it is necessary to reach a final conception which does not depend on a prior conception, such as necessity, possibility and being. These [conceptions] and their likes are sound notions embedded in the mind and imprinted on reason in a primary and innate manner. Should one seek to exhibit those notions in words, which would be simply a form of drawing attention to them in thought or reminding one of them, as well as determining them by reference to other innate notions embedded in the mind, so as to explain them by reference to other things which are better known than they.

As for proving that being is the subject matter of this science, I mean being *qua* being, it can be dispensed with; in fact, it is not even a sound enquiry. For proving a thing by itself is not possible, if we mean that by that the reality of proof, especially where that thing is identical with the proof. For that which is proved exists, and similar synonyms are identical with the concept of proof or being; just as the real relative is identical with relation to itself rather than something else, except figuratively, whether the being in question is regarded as identical with the being of something else or the being of its essence or itself. For in itself, I mean absolute [being], is not averse to any of the two divisions; nor does it require a demonstration or a necessary explanation, due to the fact that being in reality is always merely the being of something, or being in itself. It is demonstration and sensation alone that make both divisions necessary, the second conceived as the being which has no cause, and the first as the being which is relative to the material bodies. For the being which is unrelated to anything else is the very act of being and accidental being is the act of being something else.¹

Fourth Journey: Part I

On the Science of the Soul From its Original Generation from Bodily Elements to its Final Stations and its Return to its Ultimate Goals, in a Number of Sections

First Section: *The General Conditions of the Soul in a Number of Chapters*

Chapter One

On the Definition of the Soul

You should know that when the providence of the Creator, may His name be exalted, imparted everything it could create by way of the most sacred emanation, from the noblest to the nobler, until the lowest, simplest and barest elements were reached, it was not possible for this providence to stop at the point of imparting which could not be exceeded; but instead the existence of an infinite number of entities was still possible in point of potentiality leading to actuality. For, although bodily elements were characterized by great darkness, density and frigidity, they were not fully resistant to

1. The section titled 'An Illusory Obscurity and a Rational Dissipation' which follows here has been omitted.

the possibility of fulfilment, under the influence of an active principle, as happens when the rays of the stars, especially the sun, cause them to acquire subtlety and moderation, whereby they become, by acquiring ripeness and moderation, suitable materials for foods and nutrients, on the one hand, or a passive faculty for generating different entities, susceptible of receiving generation and life, on the other hand, and that through certain forms upon which the effects of wisdom and providence depend, such as animals and plants, once nature has fulfilled the conditions of the other compounds and faculties which have preceded them. The reason why the lower entity is susceptible of receiving the higher has already been discussed. For, the possible was not created as naught or in vain, but rather to fulfil its original goal; since the elements were only created so as to receive life and spirit.

The first thing they receive of the effects of life is the life¹ of nutrition, generation, growth and reproduction; followed by the life of sensation and motion, then the life of knowledge and discrimination. Each of these species of life has a perfective power through which it imparts to matter the effects of that life, together with the power subserving it. This form is called soul, the lowest [grade] of which is the vegetative soul, the intermediate the animal soul and the noblest the rational soul. All these three have a common essential intension and a common definition. We intend in this chapter to mention the absolute proof of its existence and the definition of its essence as soul. For, although simple [entities] admit of no definition or proof, with respect to the reality of their simple essence, they admit of definition and proof with respect to their action and passion. Such, then, is the status of souls and forms, insofar as they are souls and forms.

As for the proof of its existence, we say that we observe certain physical objects from which certain effects emanate in a non-uniform manner and without will, such as sensation, movement, nutrition, growth, and reproducing their kinds. Now the principle of these effects is not prime matter, since it is purely receptive and does not possess the power of acting or efficacy; nor is it the corporal form which is common to all bodies, since there may exist certain bodies which differ from those bodies with respect to these effects. Moreover, it may not be described as the source of these actions. Therefore, there must exist in these bodies some principles other than their corporeity, and are not bodies inherent therein, or else the absurdity would recur.

It follows, then, that [the soul] is a power attaching to those bodies. You have already learned, in the course of discussing passion and action, that we call every active power, from which effects emanate in a non-uniform manner, a soul; this term being the name of this power, not with respect to its simple essence, but rather with respect to its being the principle of these above-mentioned actions. That is why the discussion of the soul forms part of natural science.

1. That is, faculty or power.

As for its definition, we say, following the lead of the philosophers, that the soul has various aspects, according to which it is given different names; namely, power, perfection and form. Thus, due to its ability to act or impart motion, and to be affected by the forms of sensible and intelligible objects, which we call apprehension, it is called a power; but in relation to the matter in which it dwells, so that a vegetative, or animal entity may result, it is called a form. However, in relation to the fact that the nature of the genus was incomplete prior to the addition of the differentia, so that when it is added to it the species attains its perfection, they have asserted that the definition of the soul by reference to perfection¹ is preferable to defining it by reference to form, for the following reasons:

First, because it [perfection] is more general, insofar as the form, in the usage of the public, is what is impressed on matter. Now, part of the soul is that which is not impressed and accordingly is not a form of the body, but perfection thereof; just as the king is the perfection of the city and the pilot the perfection of the ship.

Secondly, because perfection is in relation to that notion which is closer to the nature of the genus; that is, the species; whereas form is in relation to the thing which is farther than that; that is, the matter. Form, then, requires a relation to a thing which is far and is of the nature of the substance resulting therefrom, on the one hand, and to a thing in relation to which the resultant substance is what it is purely potentially, on the other; and finally, to a thing to which real activities are not referred; I mean, the species.

Thirdly, because the connotation of matter is conjoined to the connotation of species, without conversion.

From all this, it is clear that when we say in defining the soul that it is a perfection, that would be more indicative of its meaning and would include its species from every aspect, and would not exclude immaterial² soul... .

An Ishrāqī insight

Here is a noble secret, whereby it is shown how substance can increase in substantiality and the perfection of human reality in its identity and essence may be perfected, and how this definition of the soul is not merely in accordance with its name, as in the definition of the mason, the father, son and the like. The reason for this is that the soulness of soul is not like the fatherhood of the father or the sonship of the son and the writership of the writer and the like, which may be supposed to be divested of that relationship. [Just as] the essence of the mason has a certain existence and his being a mason another existence. Moreover, his being a

1. Aristotle has defined the soul as the first actuality or perfection (*entelecheia*) of a natural or organic body capable of life (*De Anima II*, 412b). For him, however, actuality is always synonymous with form. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Najāt*, ed. M. Fakhry (Beirut, 1985), p. 197.

2. Or separate.

man is not the same as his being a mason; for the first is substance and the second a relative accident. All this is different from the soul; for the soulness of the soul is identical with its specific existence, and the essence of the soul has no other existence whereby it is not a soul, unless it has undergone certain essential perfections or changes, supervening upon its essence and substance whereby it becomes an active intellect, after being an intellect in potentiality.

The proof that the soulness of the soul from its inception is not an accident attaching to its essence, whether correlative or separate, such as motion which attaches to the sphere or fatherhood which attaches to the father's own essence, is that were it such as the generality of the philosophers have asserted,¹ it would follow that the soul is an actually realized substance like the rest of intelligible substances which are separate in essence; then something happened to it compelling it to become attached to the body and depart the sacred world and consort with the elements. Now the consequent is impossible, because what is essential does not vanish and the separate substance is not susceptible of any condition which did not belong to its essence; for the locus of accidental occurrences is corporeal matter and its accompaniments.

Moreover, the soul is the perfection of the body, and from it and the corporal matter there arises a perfect corporeal species. Now it is impossible that a natural and material species should result from an abstract and material entity necessarily; so that if the consequent is false the antecedent is also false.

Thus, it is shown that the soul's relation to the body and its management thereof is essential to it, in accordance with its individual existence. Therefore, this psychic relation to the body is constitutive thereof; but it does not follow from this that it pertains to the category of relation and does not divest the soul of the nature of substantiality, but only of that of rationality. That relation is similar to the relation of receptivity to matter and formality to physical forms and creativity, knowledge and power to the Necessary Being; as well as the relation of accidentality to blackness and whiteness and similar accidental categories. The modes of existence of these cannot be separated from a relation to something, although they have certain meanings other than sheer relation. I do not say that they have an existence other than the existence of relation; for blackness, for instance, has an essence of independence in meaning and definition, and pertains to the category of quality. However, its existence in itself is identified with its existence in the subject; I mean, its accidentality. Thus, the supervention on the subject is essential to the existence of blackness, rather than its essence. The same is true of matter, form, nature, and the soul, insofar as each one of them has another substantial essence other than relation, just as accidents have another accidental essence other than accidentality, although their individual existences are relational identities.

1. The reference here appears to be to Plato's concept of the soul as existing originally in the world of ideas then forced to descend into the material world, whereupon it became united to the body.

From this, it appears that existence is something extraneous to essence. Thus, the existence of the soul, insofar as it is a form of matter, requires a relation to the body, just as every form requires a relation to matter. However, it does not follow from this that it belongs to the category of relation or that it is an accident. For, this relation is a relation constitutive and perfective of [the object], not one of absolute necessity, as in the case of accidents. For the soul, so long as it has not passed from the potentiality of bodily existence to the actuality of a separate intellect, is still a material form, of varying degrees of proximity to or distance from its intellectual origin, depending on its varying modes of existence in point of strength or weakness, perfection or imperfection. For, existence is susceptible of strength and its opposite, as we have shown in the universal science,¹ when discussing potentiality and actuality.

Let us return now to where we left off regarding the definition of the soul and re-assert that it is a perfection of the body. Perfection, however, is either primary, which renders the species a species in act, such as the shape in relation to the sword and the chair; or secondary, which follows the specific nature of the thing, according to its actions and passion, such as cutting in relation to the sword, discrimination, deliberation, sensation and voluntary motion in relation to man. These are in fact the secondary perfections which the species does not require in order to become a species in act, unless the principle of these things attaches to it actually, so that it may acquire these things by a proximate potentiality after it only had them by a remote potentiality. Thus an animal is an animal in act, even if it does not move by will actually, and even if it does not have any sensation actually. Similarly, an engineer is an engineer in act, even if he does not exercise the art of engineering or its equivalent, and the doctor is a doctor in act, even if he is not treating anybody. The soul is a first perfection; and for a thing to be a first perfection in relation to one thing does not contradict its being a secondary perfection in relation to something else.

It cannot be said in response that the soul is not a perfection of the animal, as an animal; nor that the soul, absolutely speaking, is a perfection of the body, as such; for you have learnt that the actualization of every nature corresponds to the actualization of every member thereof, and its cessation corresponds to the cessation of all its members. Accordingly, the soul is a first perfection of a certain thing, although it is a secondary perfection of something else. The thing of which it is a first perfection must be a body; but body occurring in this definition is body in the generic sense, not in the material sense as was shown in the science of the Balance,² and the difference between the two has already been discussed in the

1. That is, metaphysics.

2. That is, logic. However, in *De Anima II*, 412 a²², Aristotle distinguishes two meanings of actuality or perfection, the one corresponding to *possession*, the other to *exercise*, of any given faculty or power.

discussion of essence also. Nor is the body of which the soul is the perfection more general than the natural or artificial body, such as the bed, the chair, the ship or the city. Even if we were to assume that the soul of the pilot is the perfection of the ship and the soul of the king the perfection of the city, this mode of perfection is not the same as that of soul in relation to the ship and the city. Were the compound of ship and soul considered as one thing, so that the soul is the perfection thereof, that supposed compound will not be a body, substance or any of the other categories. For essence is consequent upon existence and existence is a concomitant of unity; so that whatever has no unity will have no existence either. Thus, it is shown, that the soul is a first perfection of a natural body, but not every natural body; since the soul is not a perfection of fire or earth. Rather, the soul which is in this world is the perfection of a natural body from which its secondary perfections emanate through certain organs which assist it in the vital functions of sensation and voluntary movement. The significance of this with respect to the reality of the soul is that those forms whose action upon matter does not require another power are united essentially with matter, such as the elemental and inanimate forms, including the fiery, the gaseous, the ruby, the golden and other. It is as though they were purely material and divisible along with [matter].

As for those forms which act through the use of another faculty, that faculty is undoubtedly inferior to that form insofar as it is an intermediate instrument.¹ That form would then be almost superior in essence to the nature of matter and this superiority to approaching the primary corporeal matter is the characteristic of the soul, since it has a share in the angelic realm and abstractness, if only in part. It thus appears that the first perfection of a natural body is that whose psychic property operates through an organ; so that any faculty of a natural body to which it belongs to perform a certain action by means of another faculty inferior to it is, for us, a soul. This definition, namely that [the soul] is the first perfection of an organ is natural to the body in general and applies to all souls. For by the instrument mentioned in the definition of the soul is not meant that which is analogous to organs, but rather to faculties, such as the nutritive, the augmentative and the reproductive, with respect to the vegetative soul; imagination, sensation and the desiderative power, with respect to the animal, not like the stomach, the liver, the heart, the brain or the muscle in it. On this basis, the celestial soul is included in this definition, since the concept of the organic applies to it demonstratively. For demonstration rests, for us, on the fact that the sphere which possesses a soul capable of apprehending the sciences possesses a natural power which generates motion, and has also a sensitive power which differs from that belonging to those animals which act through an affection of the sense-organ. Moreover, that power of sensation is confined to some parts of their bodies, whereas another power is

1. Or organ: Arabic *ālah*.

found in the other parts. The matter of the sphere is different, due to its simplicity. For the nature of the sphere is totally of the nature of local motion which is of the same kind as the fifth nature;¹ it is also totally sensation, although the power of sense and motion without the power of imagination and the power of universal apprehension if not possible.²

We thus overcome the difficulty which the moderns have found insoluble; namely, that the above-mentioned definition, as well as any other, cannot apply to all three souls; I mean, the vegetative, the animal and the heavenly. For if we give it the name soul, because it is a perfection performing a certain action only, it would follow that every power is a soul and all the natural properties are souls also. This, however, is contrary to what the ancient men of learning have concurred in unanimously.

The soul's descent from its Holy Abode

You should know that the account of the human soul's descent from the holy world, the abode of its holy father, into the world of corporeal nature, which is like the cradle and abode of the animal soul, which is like its mother, is amply reported in the books revealed from heaven, in the symbolic references of the prophets and the allusions of the saints and the leading philosophers.

In the gracious Qur'ān the descent of the soul and its [subsequent] ascent are mentioned in numerous verses, such as the Almighty's saying: 'We have indeed created man in the best fashion, and then reduced him to the lowest of the low; except for those who have believed and did the righteous deeds' (95:4); or His saying in the account of Adam and his descent from the Garden: 'We said: 'Go down all of you from it. Then, there might come to you a guidance from Me. Then, those who follow My guidance have no cause to fear or to grieve' (2:37) or his saying: 'Go down, each one of you an enemy of the other. On earth, you will have a dwelling and enjoyment for a short while' (2:35); or His saying: 'Amassing wealth has distracted you, until you visited the graveyards—on that Day you shall be asked about that enjoyment' (102:1, 8); or His saying: 'None of you but will visit it;³ that upon your Lord is a necessary decree. Then, we will save the God-fearing and leave the evil-doers prostrate therein' (19:69, 70) or His saying: 'Just as He created you in the beginning, you shall return. One group He has guided and another group has been condemned to perdition' (7:27–28).

In a prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) [it is said]: 'People are metals like the metals of gold and silver', in reference to their pre-existence in the mines of their essences as separate intelligences, which are the treasures of God's knowledge. The node of

1. That is, ether.

2. The original here is unclear.

3. The fire of Hell.

this pre-existence corresponds to that we have established and pointed out; namely, that souls have an abstract intellectual mode of being, as well as a relational one; just as external particular objects have a certain permanence in the prior divine decree, where they are guarded against change, obliteration of permanence; whereas here below they are subject to coming to be or corruption, obliteration and affirmation, as the Almighty has said: 'God obliterates what He wishes and affirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book' (13:39); that is the preserved Tablet guarded against change or alteration.

The Commander of the Faithful,¹ peace be upon him, has said: 'May God have mercy on one who has known wherefrom, wherein and whereto.' The first [adverb] refers to the condition of the soul prior to its generation, the second to its condition upon generation and the last to what follows its generation. He has also said: 'Let him collect his wits and be one of the children of the Hereafter. For from it he came and to it he will return.' It is also reported that he said concerning the essence of the soul its origin and its resurrection: 'You should know that the human form is God's greatest proof to His creation, and it is the Book which He wrote with His own hand and is the sum-total of the forms of the two worlds. It is also the epitome of the Preserved Tablet and the witness to everything invisible and the right road to every good and the path which stretches between Paradise and Hell'.

The philosophers' Teacher, Aristotle, has said in the book of *Uthūlūjiyā*, concerning the uses of the soul's coming down to this world, something to this effect: 'It [the soul] was not harmed by its coming down to this world, but rather benefited from it. For it has acquired from this world knowledge of [visible] things and what their nature is, after it conferred on them its powers, whereby its noble and sound actions and deeds which it possessed while in the intelligible world, were revealed. For had it not revealed its actions and conferred its powers, making them exposed to sight, these powers and actions would have been in it in vain, and the soul would have forgotten the virtues and sound and perfect actions, so long as they remained hidden and invisible. Had this been the case, the soul's power and nobility would not have been known, insofar as action is actually the unfolding of the hidden power upon its appearance. Therefore, had the power of the soul remained hidden and was not manifested, it would have ceased to exist, as though it never had come into being.'²

In addition, we find in the sayings of the ancient philosophers subtle allusions and noble symbols in reference to the soul's fall from that world and its [eventual] ascent, as well as many other tales pointing in that direction. One of these is the

1. 'Alī, the first Shi'i Imam.

2. *Uthūlūjiyā Aristūṭālīs*, F. Dieterici edition (Berlin, 1882), p. 76. It is now known that the so-called *Theology* or *Book of Divinity*, generally attributed to Aristotle in the Middle Ages, is actually a paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads* IV, V and VI, probably by his disciple and editor, Porphyry of Tyre.

tale of *Salāmān and Absāl*,¹ the tale of the ringed pigeon in *Kalilah wa Dimnah* and the tale of *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*.²

The Chief Master³ has written an ode in which he enquires about the fall of the soul which opens with this line: A winged dove full of dignity and recalcitrance has come down to you from the highest world....

All this indicates that the soul enjoyed an existence antecedent to the body and a mode of being in the higher divine world and that it will eventually return and revert to where it came from. The sun of its reality and the stars of its power will rise from their setting-place, either bright and upright, or crestfallen and troubled. He,⁴ may his secret be hallowed, has also said: 'It is said that agencies which operate on bodies will be exposed to a condition which will necessitate their fall from their higher stations, etc.'

I have said in the *Footnotes*⁵ that the soul's fall is tantamount to its emanation from its original source and its coming down from its holy intellectual father.⁶ The condition necessitating its descent from that world relates to the conditions of its Maker, and the modes of its cause and circumstances. It has already been pointed out that the effects coming down or emanating from their makers emanate, together with their modalities and contingent concomitants, as well as their deficiencies and possibilities and their own need for their everlasting perfect Maker. Those deficiencies are sometimes referred to as the sin imputed to our father Adam, and the soul's emanation from it by fleeing from God's wrath. However, that is merely a dictate of wisdom in the disposition of being; for the most imperfect light is not capable of contemplating the most intense light. Do you not see that if you wish to consider a metaphysical question of great obscurity, which you have not mastered yet, and then delve into it deeply, your mind is wearied before you are able to acquire the habit of returning to it, and it hastens to neglecting it and occupying itself with some other base matter, out of fear that your brain might burn up, due to the domination of its mental appearance, just as the light of the sun dazzles⁷ the eyes of bats? It is to this [condition] that the prophetic tradition refers in this statements: 'God has seventy veils of light which, were He to uncover, the beads of His face would burn everything which its sight reaches'. The philosophers have mentioned numerous paths, by way of symbolism or allusion, pointing to the reason for the soul's falls.

Of the maxims of the ancient philosophers, we mention what Empedocles⁸ has said; namely, that the soul existed in the high and noble place, but when it sinned it

1. One of Suhrawardī's mystical writings, cf. *Opera metaphysica et mystica* (Istanbul, 1945).

2. Of Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī.

3. Ibn Sīnā.

4. Ibn Sīnā.

5. *al-Ḥawāshī*.

6. That is, the first intellect, or *Nous*, which emanates originally from the One.

7. Literally, dominates.

8. Empedocles of Acragas (Agrigento) in Sicily (d. 430 BC).

fell to this world. In fact, it came down to this world to flee God's wrath. However, having come down to this [lower] world, it became a succour of the souls whose minds were disturbed.

To these maxims also belongs the saying of the Divine Plato in his dialogue,¹ the *Phaedo*: 'The cause of the soul's descent into this [lower] world is the loss of its feathers. When it regains its feathers, it is able to ascend to its original world. 'To this may be added what he has also said in his dialogue called *Timaues*: 'The causes of the soul's descent into this [lower] world are varied. For some of them² were brought down for a sin they committed, and therefore came down to this world to be punished and chastised for their sins. Some were brought down for other reasons. However, he was brief in his account and deprecated the soul's fall and its dwelling in these [material] bodies.'³ He has also said elsewhere in his dialogue, the *Timaues*:

'The soul is a noble and blessed substance. It came down to this world by action of the good Creator. For when the Creator created this world, he sent forth thereto the soul and consigned it to it, so that the world may possess reason; because it was not possible⁴ for this world which was made thoroughly perfect to be without reason. Nor was it possible for the world to have reason while it had no soul. It is for this reason that the Almighty Creator sent down the soul into this world and made it to dwell in it. That He sent down our souls and made them to dwell in our bodies, so that this world may become thoroughly perfect. Now, in order that it may not be lower than that world⁵ in point of perfection, it was necessary that there should exist in the world of sense the same variety of living things as exist in this intelligible world.'⁶

In the same strain, Aristotle has said in many parts of his book, the *Knowledge of Divinity*.⁷ Such is his statement that 'nature is of two types, rational and sensible. When the soul dwells in the intelligible world, it is better and nobler; whereas when it dwells in the world of sense, it is baser and lower, due to the body in which it was made to dwell. However, the soul, although it is rational and belongs to the higher intelligible world, it is bound to derive some aspects of the world of sense and dwell in it. For its nature is akin to both the intelligible and the sensible worlds. Nor should the soul be blamed or reproached for departing the intelligible world and dwelling in this [lower] world, because it is placed between both worlds. The soul was reduced to that condition, because it is the last of those noble, divine substances and the first of the natural, sensible substances. When it became a resident of the

1. Arabic, book.

2. That is, the souls.

3. cf. *Uthūlūjiyā*, p. 10.

4. The original says: necessary.

5. That is, the higher or intelligible world.

6. cf. *Uthūlūjiyā*, p. 11.

7. That is, the *Uthūlūjiyā*.

sensible world, it did not withhold therefrom its virtues, but instead imparted to it its own powers and adorned it with the highest adornment. It may even have contracted part of that baseness, but only that it may be on its guard and beware.¹

He has also said in another place: 'The noble soul, despite the fact that it has departed its higher world, and descended into this lower world, has done so by dint of its capacity and high power, so as to inform the entities which are beneath it and manage them. When it has been released from this world, after informing and managing it and regained its own world quickly, its descent into the [lower] world will not cause her the least harm; but instead it will have acquired from that world the knowledge of things and learnt what its nature is'.²

*The argument of the Master of Illumination³ that souls cannot pre-exist
and its rebuttal*

The same is true of what has been reported about the Persian Orientals that darkness besieged light and imprisoned it for a period, then it was assisted and was supported by the angels. Thus [light] overcame Ahriman, who is identical with darkness, and beat darkness, but exempted it for a fixed period. Moreover, darkness arose from light due to an evil thought.

This account is also referred to the soul, which is a luminous jewel, insofar as it is identical with reason in act, as has been shown; whereas darkness is identical with the animal and natural power. Its imprisonment is the result of the domination of [external] powers and its gravitation towards the lower world. The assistance of the angels may be explained as the result of the accidental good fortune in guiding the soul to receive an intellectual illumination and its actualization. The exemption for a fixed period indicates the soul's survival until the onset of death or severing the relation,⁴ and finally the evil thought indicates the soul's preoccupation with material affairs.

Of the arguments for the impossibility of human souls pre-existing their bodies is the statement of the author of the *Wisdom of Illumination*⁵ and *Allusions*⁶ in that book that, had 'ministering lights' existed prior to their bodies, we would say that had some of [them] been such that they did not minister to any body whatsoever, then they could not be referred to as ministering and their existence would be nullified. Had any of [these lights] been such as to minister, a time will necessarily come when the whole would collapse, and no ministering light would remain.

1. cf. *Uthulūjyā*, p. 80.

2. cf. *Uthulūjyā*, p. 76.

3. Shaykh al-Ishrāq is the title of Suhrawardī (d. 1191), who laid down the foundations of the philosophy of illumination (*Ishrāq*).

4. That is, contact with the external world.

5. *Hikmah al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī.

6. That is, *al-Talwihāt*.

I have mentioned in my own *Footnotes*,¹ in commenting on that, that we have to choose the first alternative and say that the separate existence of souls is different from its relational existence. Those ancient [philosophers] who held that souls have a certain existence in the intelligible world, prior to bodies, did not mean thereby that the soul, as soul, has an intellectual existence. They rather meant that it has a mode of existence which belongs to it as a ministering soul. On this view, there does not follow from [their thesis] that it is not ministering to bodies any inactivity. Inactivity will follow only if the soul, as soul, were not ministering to bodies; for then its existence would be idle and negative. Inactivity will not follow, unless in its intellectual existence it did not minister to bodies. Rather, insofar as it is an intellect, it has no concern for the body; but insofar as it is a soul, it never ceases to manage the body and be in touch with it.

We may add that the intellectual principle² from which the souls derived their existence and spread throughout this [lower] world is infinite in power, direction and existential modality. Therefore, whenever souls separate from it, it still retains its infinite power, exactly as it is, without cessation or diminution; for it is the product of the First Principle of all things. The existence of the infinite souls in the intelligible world should not be understood as an attribute of numerical plurality; or that it is subject to essential or spatial order, so that the repetition which he³ has mentioned will recur in each one of them. For then, what he has mentioned would follow; namely, that there will come a time in which not a single soul will remain.

You should not imagine, on the basis of what we have mentioned, that the existence of souls in the intellectual principle is similar to the existence of one thing in another potentially, like the existence of the infinite forms in the receptive principle, I mean prime matter. For, the existence of one thing in the *agent* is not the same as its existence in the *recipient*; because its existence in the agent is more real and greater in efficacy than its existence in itself. Its existence in the recipient, however, may be lower and baser than its existence in itself and according to its essence. For, its existence in the recipient is liable to a power analogous to non-being, whereas its existence in itself consists in being or non-being. It has in the agent, a mode of being by necessity. Thus, the existence of the souls in their intellectual principle and holy father is a noble and simple being which is neither liable to partition nor dissipation. To understand all this, the heart's insight must rise from the plane of certain knowledge to that of certainty itself.

1. *al-Ḥawāshī*.

2. Or First Intellect according to Neoplatonism. This intellect is itself an emanation from the First Principle or the One.

3. That is, Suhrawardī.

Chapter Twenty-Three¹*Determination of the Category to Which Motion Belongs and That to Which it Does Not Belong*

You should know that motion, due to its weak existence, is in relation to six matters: the agent, the recipient, that in which motion inheres, that from which motion issues, that towards which it moves and finally time.

We have already shown its relation to the recipient. As for its relation to the agent, you have also learnt it in two ways; since you have learnt that its relation to the agent and the recipient is of two kinds: one which determines their difference in reality, just as the two categories of action and passion differ, and one which does not determine their difference, just as the concomitants of entities and those of essences, such as the heat of the form of fire, and the even character of number four.

As for its relation to that from which and towards which, this can be inferred from its definition, since it is susceptible of the potentiality for continuity—that from which and towards which are sometimes contraries. Sometimes they are opposites in some respect, so that they can never combine, sometimes that from which or towards which may be such that occurrences in them will last for a while, so that there may be a period of rest at both ends, as in intermittent notions; or it may not be so, as is the case with the spheres.

Some philosophers have said that the beginning is sometimes identical with the end, as in the sphere. For, that from which motion issues is the beginning and that to which it leads is the end. This is false; for the sphere's arrival during the diurnal movement to a given daily position at sunrise is different from its position the day before, both in fact and in essence, although it is similar to it. Thus, the beginning is different from the end in essence, and it is not necessary to consider both aspects, except when we compare the antecedent and the consequent, as in all limits of the instant; for each one of them is a beginning of one thing and an end of another.

You should also know that calling the limits of the spatial, celestial motion points, is by way of latitude. For those limits are actually instantaneous positions which exist in potentiality; but it is a potentiality which is close to actuality. As for the relation of motion to that in which the motion inheres, it is much closer; so much so that some have claimed that it is the same as the category in which motion has occurred. This, however, is not true at all; it is rather the renewal of that category, as we have shown. Yet, it is the same as the category of passion when referred to the recipient, and the category of action when referred to the agent. That is why it is impossible for motion to occur in one of them, because it is in fact the cessation from one state and departing from another in such a way that it is the cessation of a fixed state. For, were it to occur in a non-fixed state, it would not be a cessation of that state, but a continuation thereof.

1. Part 3 of vol. 1 (1383/1963), p. 75.

In general, motion in a certain category signifies that the mover has at every point an individual part of that category. Therefore, that in which motion occurs must at every point have a part thereof in potentiality. There is no instant part of those two categories. For instance, if the motion of heating occurs, it should be towards cooling. Therefore, the body in process of heating must be towards cooling, although it did not cease to cool, so that it may be said to move in it. If, however, in the process of moving, it had ceased to be heated, then the motion does not belong to the category of passion. Nor does it belong to the category of time¹. As for the [category of] relation, even if renewal occurs in it, its existence is not independent; since relation is always concomitant to the existence of both terms; so that there is no motion therein, as already mentioned.

The same is true of renewal; for its motion is concomitant to a motion of position, as in the turban or suchlike. Therefore, there are only four of the categories in which motion, according to the public view, remains; but five, according to us: substance, modality, quantity, place and position. Rest is [motions] opposite, in the sense of its privation or non-being. (This is dealt with in detail in *al-Shifā'*).²

However, this privation cannot be described in terms of existence; for that which is a privation absolutely does not exist in any sense. Now, the body which is not [actually] in motion, but is moving potentially, must have an extraneous description which distinguishes it from other things. For, were it not extraneous, it would not separate from it when it moves. Therefore, this description applies to the body in question by virtue of some peculiarity in it. [The body] must have an agent and a patient, unlike the privation which does not need to be given any description; such as the privation of two horns in relation to man, which cannot be referred to any existence or power, contrary to walking. For the latter comes into being as soon as the impediment of walking ceases to exist, and it has, in some sense, a mode of being and a cause identical with the cause of being potentially. From this, it can be seen that the cause of motion implies the motion of privation, as already mentioned. This caused privation is not the privation of things in general, but rather the nothingness of something in a given thing in a given state, which is its being potentially.³

1. Arabic, *matā*, when.

2. Of Ibn Sīnā.

3. The thrust of the above argument is that motion always implies two terms, 'from which' and 'towards which', resulting in the emergence of a new condition, which did not exist earlier. Thus, the crescent is potentially a full moon, in the sense that it moved or changed from one condition A which existed, to a subsequent condition B, which did not, but was still possible. The non-existence of B was an essential condition of the motion in question.

Chapter Twenty-Six*Resuming the Proof that the Motion Occurs in the Category of Substance*

You should know that the nature inherent in the body does not contribute any of the natural properties belonging to it by itself. For, were it to act upon a certain body, it would be capable of action without the intermediary of the body. The consequent is false and so is the antecedent.

The proof of the falsity of the consequent is that [nature] is a corporeal power and were it to act without the intermediary of the body, it would no longer be corporeal, but immaterial. As for the truth of the concomitance, it follows from the fact that the various natures and powers do not act without the assistance of matter and position. The proof thereof is that the act of bringing into being depends on actual being and is posterior to it; for unless a thing exists, it cannot be imagined to be a cause of being. Thus its being a cause of being depends upon its being existent. Therefore, if the mode of being an entity depends on matter, then its mode of bringing [something else] into being is dependent upon it.

Moreover, the existence of matter is a spatial mode of existence and its role, either in point of action or passion, follows upon its spatial position; so that what has no position in relation to it cannot be supposed to have an action or passion thereon. For had any power with the capacity to act without the concurrence of position, it would dispense with [matter] in its operation, and whatever can dispense with [matter] in its operation can dispense with it in existence, so that it would be independent of it, which is absurd. It follows, that nature has no manner of action upon the matter in which it exists; since matter has no position in relation to itself or to what dwells in itself; otherwise everything which has a position would have another position, which is absurd. Therefore, whatever produces matter or acts upon matter cannot be something material, and accordingly corporeal nature cannot act upon matter, or else individual matter would precede [general] matter. Therefore all the properties which nature derives from, natural motion of natural primary qualities, such as heat with respect to fire and humidity with respect to water, are concomitants of nature, without the intervention of production or affection between it and these things. Thus, it is necessary that there should exist in the order of being a principle higher than nature, its concomitants or effects. Now, one of its necessary effects is motion in itself; and therefore nature and motion are conjoined in being. For nature must be something constantly recurring in itself, just as motion; in fact, motion is the manifestation of the necessary recurrence. The same is true of natural quality and natural quantity; since the coming into being of each of them is simultaneous with the coming-to-be of nature and its permanence with that of nature. Such also is the case in all natural conditions with respect to their simultaneity with nature with respect to coming-to-be, cessation and permanence. The emanation

of being, however, passes through the medium of nature and this is the sense of what they¹ said about the mode of the form's preceding matter; namely, that it is a partner in causing matter rather than that form causes it independently of any intermediary or instrument preceding it; for they are coequal with respect to being. The same is true of nature in relation to those natural properties which include motion; therefore motion must constantly arise and change in all bodily objects. In fact, the changing positions of the spheres are caused by the changing natures of the spheres, very much like natural alterations and quantitative motions which occur in the elemental entities, whether simple or compound.

Another 'oriental' proof [may be given]. Every corporeal substance has a mode of being which requires the inherence of certain accidents, which cannot be separated from it, and whose relation to the individual entity is similar to the relation of necessary derivative differentiae to the species. These necessary accidents are called individuating [properties] by the masses, but are in fact *signs* of individuation only. By sign is meant here 'mark' of the object which is expressed in terms of its concept, just as the real derivative differentia is expressed in terms of its concept, just as the real derivative differentia is expressed in terms of its logical differentia,² as for instance, growing in relation to plants, sensation in relation to animal and rational in relation to man. Now, the first is the mark of the vegetative soul, the second, of the animal soul, and the third, of the rational soul. All these souls are derivative differentiae, and the same holds of other differentiae in relation to substantial compounds. For each one of them is a simple substance which can be called universal, logical differentia, according to the manner of calling a thing by the name of its essential concomitant; they are in fact simple, particular entities which have no essence.

The same is true of necessary concomitants of individual entities, insofar as they are called individuated. For individuation in a certain mode of being is identical with the individuated entity; and these necessary concomitants emanate from it in the same way light emanates from the luminous object and heat from the hot object of fire. If this is granted, we would say that each corporeal individual is susceptible of receiving these individuating properties in succession, either in whole or in part, such as time, quantity, position, place and the like. For their alteration depends on the alteration of the mode of being requiring it, and is in fact identical with it somehow. For the existence of every corporeal nature may be described essentially as the continuous, quantified, positioned, localized temporal substance in itself. The alteration of quantities, colours and positions necessitates the alteration of the

1. That is, the Neoplatonists, who regarded matter and form as two separate components of physical objects, which emanate from a higher principle, which is *Nous*, or from the One.

2. The differentia (*faṣl*) in logic, is that characteristic which distinguishes the *different* species, subsumed under the genus (*jins*). Thus rational is the differentia of animal, flying that of bird.

individual, substantial and corporeal existent, and this is precisely what is called motion in the category of substance; since the existence of a substance is substance, just as the existence of an accident is an accident.

As a representational admonition, [we say] that every corporeal substance has a flowing, ever-renewed nature, but has at the same time an aspect which is constant, continuous and permanent, whose relation to it is similar to the relation of the spirit to the body. And just as the human spirit, being immaterial, abides, whereas the nature of the body is in constant disintegration, dissolution and flux, and yet its essence is constantly renewed due to the supervention of similar parts continuously [upon it]; while mankind is in total oblivion of that, rather 'are in perplexity with respect to a new creation' (50:14); the same is true of the natural forms of things. For they are ever-renewed, with respect to their material, spatial and temporal mode of being, and they have a progressive mode of being which is not permanent in itself; but with respect to their intellectual mode of being and their immaterial, Platonic existence eternally and everlastingly in the mind of God Almighty. I do not say that they are permanent by virtue of their own permanence, but rather by virtue of the permanence of God Almighty, not even by virtue of God Almighty's causing them to be permanent. Between the two statements, then, is a difference, as will be shown in due course; for the first is a worldly mode of being which is vanishing and perishing constantly and has no stability, while the second is a permanent mode of being in God, which is neither vanishing nor perishing, due to the fact that it is impossible that anything should vanish from His knowledge of that His knowledge should undergo change. 'There is indeed in this an admonition to worshipping people' (21:106).

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Refuting What the Master (Ibn Sinā) and Others Have Said to the Effect that the Coming-to-be of Substantial Forms is not by Motion [but] by Something Else.

The gist of what they said, as already mentioned, is that form is not susceptible of growth, and what is not susceptible of growth comes to be instantly. For, were it susceptible of growth its species will either remain the same, in the midst of growth, or not. If it remains the same, then the change has not occurred in the form, but rather in its concomitants. If, on the other hand, it does not remain the same, then this will be tantamount to the vanishing of the form, rather than its growth. Moreover, it is necessary that it should be succeeded by other forms, and those succeeding forms will either include one which lasts longer than one instant or not. If they do include, then that motion has come to rest; if not, then we have a series of successive forms each existing for an instant.

This argument can be reduced to two arguments; one is that it entails the succession of instants, which is contradicted by the existence of motion in the

category of quality and the rest. The second entails that motion requires the existence of the subject [of motion], and matter as such does not exist; therefore it is not liable to motion with respect to form, contrary to quality; since the subject, insofar as it exists, does not require quality so as to be liable to motion. If the validity of this argument is granted, the first part of the discourse¹ would fall to the ground, since the crux of the matter is this argument, which asserts that motion in the form can only be a matter of successive forms, none of which can exist for more than one instant. Now, the cessation of the form entails the cessation of the subject; therefore, no part of these subjects will last for a moment of time, whereas everything movable lasts throughout the time of the motion. This calls for scrutiny, since it is contradicted by [the phenomena of] generation and corruption, and [Ibn Sīnā's] statement that the corruption of the form necessitates the corruption of the subject may either mean that its corruption will necessitate the corruption of the whole resulting from it and its locus, and this is true. However, the movable is not that whole, so that it may cause the corruption of the whole. The movable, instead, is the locus together with some form or other, just as the movable in the category of quantity is the locus of quantity, together with some quantity or other. If, however, he means that the corruption of the form necessitates the corruption of the matter, then this is not true; or else matter would come to be in every form which did not exist before, whether instantly or gradually. Now, every contingent entity has a matter, therefore contingent matters will be required *ad infinitum*, which is absurd. However, if there did not exist something whose essence is permanent, contingent entities would not need matter; whereas if there existed therein a permanent entity, the cessation of the form will not entail its cessation necessarily.

Moreover, it is strange that the Master [Ibn Sīnā] has asked himself the question regarding the necessary correlation of matter and form; namely, that the specific form is evanescent, and therefore matter should cease to exist upon its evanescence. He then replied that the individual unity of matter is preserved by the *specific* unity of the form, rather than the individual unity. If this is the Master's view with respect to the assumption that motion should occur in the form, then the change of form does not necessitate the corruption of matter; the truth being that matter remains, and so does the form in the manner of continuous renewal, which does not contradict individual existence, as they have declared in connection with the individuation of intermediate motions. Their statement that the degree of growth or diminution is another type [of motion] must mean that which is actually distinct from other [motions] in point of existence. This does not contradict the claim that where blackness increases, the infinite varieties thereof are in it potentially; and the same holds in the case of continuous alteration.

1. Namely, the succession of instants of time.

Moreover, the Master [Ibn Sīnā] has given another argument and shown its weakness; namely, that substance has not contrary and therefore there can be no motion therein, since motion is the transition from one contrary to another. He then criticized [this argument] on the ground that if we consider, in the case of two contraries, their successive supervention upon the same subject, then form has no contrary; but if we do not consider that, and are content with their succession upon the substratum, then form has a contrary. For, the form of water and fire are two modes of being common to the same substrate and they can succeed each other, despite the fact that they are of the utmost contrariety.

METAPHYSICAL PENETRATIONS

*Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*¹

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The Fourth Penetration

In Response to Doubts that have been made Concerning the Objectivity of Essence

Verily there is, for those who are veiled from the contemplation of the light of essence, which shines upon all contingent beings which exist and those who deny the lights of the sun of the Truth which manifests itself in all quiddities which are contingent, [there are for these people] imaginary [negative sense] veils and strong veils, which we have cast aside. We dispersed this darkness and untied their knots and we solved the difficulties by permission of God the Wise. And here they are [here are the doubts cast upon them]:

Question: As far as essence is concerned, if it were to be actualized *in concreto*, or in the external world, it would be an existent (*mawjūd*) and then for that existing thing there would have to be another essence, and so on, ad infinitum.

Answer: Verily [as assertion] if one means by existent, that by which essence subsists, that is impossible because there is nothing in the world which is existent according to this meaning, neither quiddity nor essence. As for the quiddity we have indicated that it is not possible for essence to subsist by it. As for essence itself, it is impossible because a thing cannot subsist upon itself. The consequent (*lāzim*) is false therefore the antecedent (*malzūm*) must be false. Rather, we say that if we mean by existent this meaning, that is that by which essence subsists, it is necessary that essence be non-existent according to this meaning. A thing does not subsist by itself. For example, whiteness is not something which possesses white colour. In fact, that which possesses white colour is something else like a body or matter. And being non-existent according to this meaning does not necessitate qualifying a thing by its contradictory opposite, because that which is contradictory to existence is nothingness [non-existence], not a thing which has become non-existent or the non-existent. Now, one considers (in what is logically called contradiction) the unity of attribution in which the predicate is attributed to the subject by univocality (*muwāṭāt*) or by derivation (*ishtiqāq*).

And if one means by it [i.e., *mawjūd*] the simple meaning which is interpreted in Persian as *hast* and its equivalents, it is existent (*mawjūd*), and its existentness

1. This translation is based on the Arabic original of *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir*, published by the Département d'Iranologie de l'Institut Franco-Iranien de Recherche (Tehran, 1964), pp. 18–34.

(*mawjūdiyyah*) is its actualization objectively by itself. For something to be actualized as existent is exactly for it to be actualized as essence. It is not that it is something which is added to its essence. By this is meant that whatever is actualized for other than existence through existence is actualized for existence in itself in its very essence, such as to become actualized in space and in time is to be so in their essence and for others through them. And the same is true for precedents and antecedents of various times and places [by which is meant that for time and space to exist in time and space there is no need for another time and space]. But those things which are temporal and spatial need time and space in order to be temporal and spatial. This is also the case in the meaning of continuity and it is permanent in mathematical (*ta'limī*) quantity in itself and for other things accidental through it. And [this is also the case of] the intelligible for the intelligible form in its essence and for something other by accident.

Question: But then each existence is a necessary existence by its essence since there is no meaning to necessary being except that its existence be necessary [that is, could not exist]. And it is inevitably the affirmation of a thing being this thing itself.

Answer: One can solve this through three considerations: anteriority and posteriority (*taqaddum* and *ta'akhkhur*), perfection and deficiency (*tamām* and *naqṣ*), richness [in itself, and in need of nothing else] and need [independence and dependence] (*ghinā'* and *hājah*). [And in this case] the objection does not distinguish between the necessity of essence and a pre-eternal necessity. Now, the Necessary Being is anterior to everything and is not caused by anything. It is perfect and there is nothing more intense [than it] as far as the power of being is concerned and there is no imperfection in it in any way whatsoever. Furthermore, it is sufficient unto itself and it does not depend on any existence because its existence is necessary through pre-eternal necessity and is not limited by the duration of its essence nor conditioned by the duration of any qualification. The contingent existences are essences which are not sufficient unto themselves to exist, being dependent ipseities, if one ceases to consider their instaurer. From this point of view, they are illusory and impossible, since the act is constituted by the agent in the same way that the quiddity of the species is constituted by its specific difference. The meaning of 'existence being necessary' signifies that its essence is existent by itself without having need of any instaurer which would bestow existence upon it nor of a receptacle which would receive it. But the meaning of 'existence being existent' signifies that if it is actualized either by itself or by an agent, it has no need, in order to be realized, of another existence which would make it become realized, in contrast to non-existence, because of its need in becoming existent of the consideration of existence and that which is adjoined to it.

Question: If it is understood that for existence to be existent signifies existence itself while for something else to be existent signifies that it is a thing which possesses existence, then existence is not attributed to everything with the same

meaning. And yet it was proven that the employment of existence for all existents is according to a common meaning. One must therefore take the proposition that existence is existent as having the same meaning as what [it possesses] in other things among existents, that is to say, a thing possessing existence. However, existence is not existent because of the necessity of a chain *ad infinitum* because one would have to begin once again with the existence of the existence, *et cetera*.

Answer: This difference between the existentiality of things and the existentiality of existence does not necessitate a difference in employing the concept of existence as one that is derived and common among all things, because either the existent is taken in its simple meaning as we have indicated before or it is taken in the most general sense as signifying something whose existence one affirms, whether it involves the affirmation of a thing in itself which comes back to saying that it is impossible for a thing to be separate from itself, or it involves affirming something else for it, as for example the concept of 'whiteness' or of 'relation', *et cetera*. In this latter case what one understands by 'white' is what possesses whiteness whether whiteness be this thing itself or something else.

To permit the use of a part of the significance of a term does not exclude the term being used in its true sense. That white encompasses something more than whiteness results from the particularity of some of the individuals and not from the very concept of white. In the same way, the being of existents encompassing something more than existents, for example quiddity, results from the particularities of contingent individuals and does not come from the essence of the concept that is common among them.

Similar to this is what has been said by Ibn Sīnā in the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'* (The Book of Healing): 'In the same manner that one understands existence to be the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) Itself, one understands the unique as being the unique itself and one comprehends from this that a quiddity, whatever it may be, such as man or another substance, is necessary existence. In the same way one can understand by the unique that which is a certain water or man and that this water or this man is unique.' He [Ibn Sīnā] has also said: 'There is thus a difference between a quiddity to which has been added the unique or existent, and the unique and the existent inasmuch as they are unique and existent.'

And he [Ibn Sīnā] has also said in the *Ta'liqāt* (Glosses): 'If it is asked: Does existence exist? the answer is yes, it exists, in the sense that it is the very reality of existence to exist, for existence is the act of existing (*mawjūdiyyah*).'

The words of Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī in his *Ḥawāshī* (Glosses) on *al-Maṭālī'* (The Places of Rising) by Urmawī really astonished me: 'It is not the concept of a thing which is considered in the derived from (*mushtaḡ*) as such, for example "rational", because if this were to be so then general accident would enter into specific difference. And, inversely, if that to which a thing is attributed were to be considered in the derived from the matter of particular possibility would become

necessary. In fact, the thing to which one attributes “laughing” is “man” and the judgment which affirms a thing of itself is a necessary mode of judgment. And the mention of a thing in the explanation of derived forms is to show the source to which that which is implied leads back.’ End of his words.

And this is close to what has been mentioned by some of the outstanding figures among those who have come later [i.e., Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī] in *al-Ḥāshiyāt al-qadīmah* (The Old Glosses) in order to prove the unity of accident and accidental.

It is then understood that that to which is attributed the derived form and that to which it corresponds is a simple thing not necessitating any composition resulting from the qualified and qualification. Furthermore, a thing is not taken into notional consideration (*mutabar*) in the qualification itself, whether it be in a general or particular manner.

Question: If existence were *in concreto* a qualification existing for quiddity, the latter would be therefore a receptacle *in concreto* and of necessity the existence of the receptacle is anterior to the existence of that which it receives. Therefore existence would have to be anterior to existence (to itself).

Answer: That existence exists or is realized *in concreto* in that which possesses quiddity does not imply at all that the quiddity plays the role of receptacle for it, because the relation between the two is one of unification and not connectedness. The qualification of quiddity by existence results from an analysis operated by thought, since existence is one of the accidents of quiddity distinguished as such by analysis of thought, as we have already explained and as we shall explain later.

Question: And if existence were to be existent then it is either anterior to quiddity or posterior to quiddity or the two are simultaneous. The consequence of the first alternative is the actualization of existence independently and in the absence of quiddity. It follows that qualification (*ittiṣāf*) is anterior to the thing that is qualified and is realized independent of it. The second alternative has for consequence that quiddity is existent before existence, from which would follow regression ad infinitum which is absurd. The third alternative has for consequence that the quiddity is existent at the same time as existence but not by it. It therefore must derive its existence from elsewhere and would have the same consequence as the preceding case. The consequences being false, the antecedent must [also] be false.

Answer: It has been said before that the qualification of quiddity by existence is a mental or intellectual abstraction and is not like the qualification of a thing by external accidents such as a body by whiteness, which would require that each of the two would have a positive reality apart from the other so that one could imagine between the two these three alternatives of anteriority, posteriority and simultaneity. Consequently there is no anteriority and there is no posteriority for either of the two concerning the other and also no simultaneity because a thing is not anterior to itself, is not posterior to itself and also is not simultaneous with itself.

The accidentality of existence for quiddity resides in it being within the power of the intellect (*‘aql*) to consider essence as such, [completely] separated from existence. In this case, existence is found to be external to essence by the intellect. If one comes back to the question concerning the relation between the two, when they are separated (*tajrīd*) by the operation of the mind, it will be said that these two [i.e., essence and existence], inasmuch as they are considered as abstractions operated by the mind, exist simultaneously. By this is meant that existence exists by itself or by its instaurer, and quiddity considered in itself and as the intellect isolated it from all existences, possesses a kind of positive reality (*thubūt*), as it will be explained further on. As a result, when one speaks of the simultaneity of quiddity and existence in reality, it means that existence is existent by its [own] essence and quiddity is united with it, and is existent through it and not through something else.

When the Agent has bestowed existence (*afāda*) to a quiddity, it has bestowed its existence. And when it has bestowed existence, it is meant precisely that it has bestowed this existence by itself. The existence of everything is in its essence the subject which receives in predicate the quiddity of this thing. Therefore neither quiddity nor existence possesses antecedence or precedence in relation to one another.

When one of the knowers of Truth [i.e., those who have ascertained the truth of things in reference to Ṭūṣī] declares that existence is anterior to quiddity, he means by it that that which is the principle and source for the procession and realization *in concreto* is existence. That is to say that existence is in its essence the subject to which is attributed in predication certain universal concepts called quiddities and essentialities [*dhātīyyāt*]; in the same way that, by the intermediary of another existence added to it in accident, it becomes the subject to which is attributed other concepts which one calls accidentalities. The anteriority of existence to essence is not the same as the anteriority of cause to effect nor the same as the anteriority of the receptacle to the thing received. Rather, it is like the anteriority of that which is by essence to that which is by accident or the anteriority of that which is true (*ḥaqīqah*) to that which simply has a figurative (*majāz*) (or metaphorical) sense.

Question: We can come to the point of conceiving existence while we doubt whether it exists or not. Therefore, it needs an added existence for it to exist and the same reasoning could be repeated à propos of the existence of the existence and there would be an infinite regression (*regressus ad infinitum*). There is no refuge except to say that existence consists of nothing but a manner of considering things (i.e., quiddities).

Answer: The reality of existence is not in any way actualized in its essence in any mind among all the minds, because the act of existence is not a universal concept and the existence of every existent is this existent itself *in concreto*, and it is not possible for that which is *in concreto* to be a mental concept. Existence which is represented as a general concept of thought is the existence which one

calls copulative [*intisābī*] existence, which is proper to logical judgments. As for knowledge of the reality of existence, that cannot be other than illuminative presence and immediate vision of concrete reality. Consequently, no doubt remains concerning its identity.

What responds best to this question is to demonstrate what consequence follows of necessity from sustaining the view that existence is added to quiddity, in making use of the same argument as this question (or the person who poses it) and in saying: we can conceive intellectually the quiddity while doubting its existence or while neglecting it (not thinking about it). What one conceives intellectually is other than what one doubts; therefore existence is added to quiddity. However, what we verified in principle is that existence is not added to quiddity, and also that the way in which it is an 'accident of' quiddity is not that of an accident, neither in the concrete realm (or objectively), nor conceptually, except in the analysis carried out by the mind as we have already indicated. And therefore the two bases (of the question) are destroyed.

Question: If existence were to be *in concreto* in the objective world, it would follow from that, since it does not belong to the predicate of substance, that it would belong to the category of quality and the definition of 'quality' would be applicable to it. Therefore, from that would follow first of all the absurdity that was mentioned before, that is that the subject would exist before its own existence implying a vicious circle and infinite regression. Furthermore, quality would be the most general of all things and substance would be itself also quality and the same would hold true for quantity and other predicates.

Answer: Substance, quality, and other predicates which are the same as Aristotelian categories belong to the category of quiddity and they are universal concepts which are genus, species, essentiality and accidentality. But existing realities or realities in the act of existence are concrete ipseities and individual entities, not contained under a universal [concept], whether it be essential or accidental. Substance, for example, is a universal quiddity whose reality in concrete existence is that it not be in a substratum. Quality is a universal quiddity whose reality in the concrete existence is not to accept either divisibility or relationality and the same holds true for the other predicates (categories). Therefore the objection that *existence* would be substance or quality or quantity or another one of the accidents falls by the wayside.

And it has been also mentioned that existence has no genus and no specific difference and no quiddity and it is not itself a genus or a specific difference or a species for anything; and it is neither general nor particular accident because all these matters belong to the category of universals.

[The existence] that one counts among general accidents and general concepts is *mawjūdiyyah* (state of existence) in the sense of the copulative verb 'to be' and not the reality of *existence*.

Whoever says that 'existence is an accident' means by that the general intelligible concept and in saying that it is an accident he means that it is something outside of or extrinsic to quiddities, which are added to it [existence] as predicate.

Also *existence* is opposed to accidents because the *existence* of accidents in themselves is their *existence* for their substratum, whereas existence is precisely the *existence* of the substratum and not the existence of an accident in the substratum.

In order to become realized, accidents are in need of a substratum and *existence* does not need for its realization a substratum. Rather, it is the substratum which needs *existence* in order to become real (*taḥaqquq*).

The truth of the matter is that the existence of substance is substance by or through the substantiality of the substance and not by another substantiality; and the *existence* of the accident is accident through the very accidentality of this accident and not by another accidentality, in the same way that you were taught concerning what exists between *essence* and *existence*.

Question: If existence is that which is existent for quiddity, then it has a relationship to it, and there is also an existence for this relationship; and this saying can also be said concerning the existence of that relationship to the relationship of the relationship and this causes an infinite regression.

Answer: The explanations that have proceeded suffice to remove this objection, because *existence* is quiddity (*essence*) itself *in concreto* and is only different from quiddity conceptually. There is therefore no relation between the two, except as considered in thought. Under this consideration, the relationship does possess a certain existence, which is essentially this relationship itself and which in its turn cannot be distinguished from it except conceptually (according to the manner in which thought considers it). The infinite regression [which is alleged] is broken as soon as conceptualization ceases to make distinctions. You will come to know later how the two (*existence* and *essence*) are connected according to their condition under conceptual analysis.

The Fifth Penetration

Concerning the Manner in which Quiddity is Qualified (ittiṣāf) by Existence

Perhaps you will return and say: 'If there were to be for *existence* individuations in quiddities other than portions (*ḥiṣaṣ*), then the affirmation of all individuation of *existence* for quiddity would presuppose the positive reality of the quiddity according to the well-known principle [i.e., if one affirms something of a certain thing, this presupposes the affirmation or positive reality of that thing]. Consequently, quiddity would already have to possess a certain positive reality before its own positive reality, like the difficulty which has already been raised.'

Know that the allegation of this saying [difficulty] does not concern the reality of existence as existence *in concreto*. Rather, when it pertains to the problem of

existence as an abstract concept, then difficulties arise because existence is the same as quiddity itself according to the thesis of admitting the reality *in concreto* of *existence*. Properly speaking there is in reality no qualification between the two [i.e., one cannot be the predicate of the other] according to this hypothesis. On the contrary, in the second hypothesis, *existence* differs from quiddity and is therefore a qualification for it. It is then the modality of this qualification that causes difficulty, because if one speaks of the qualification of quiddity by existence, in the case where one understands by *existence*, being expressed by the predicative verb 'to be' (*al-kawn al-maṣḍarī*), then the subject which receives the predicate is the positive reality of the quiddity. And quiddity, in whatever aspect one considers it, possesses being expressed by the predicative verb. But then it is inconceivable that, from the point of view of being in the absolute sense, quiddity be anterior to this absolute being. The situation is different if it is *existence* that is the real thing *in concreto* while quiddity possesses a conceptual actuality outside its *existence*.

However, the truth which merits being verified is that *existence*, whether it be concrete or conceptual, is the very affirmation of the quiddity and its *existence*. It is not the affirmation of something or the existence of something belonging to this quiddity. Between these two meanings there is an evident difference. That to which the already mentioned rule (*al-qā'idah*) applies is that the affirmation of something for another thing is not the affirmation in itself alone. Thus our proposition 'Zayd is existent' comes to the same thing as 'Zayd is Zayd'. Therefore, the derivative rule does not concern it.

The majority (*jumhūr*) of philosophers, because they were inattentive to this subtle distinction, fell into the perplexity that is known. And they became divided into followers of different paths. Some of them applied exclusively the general rule of the proposition, said to be 'derivative' (*far'īyyah*), to cases other than to the qualification of existence. Others fled from this rule and rallied around the idea of necessary substitution (*istilzām*) to this 'derivative' proposition. And yet others rejected completely the positive idea of *existence*, conceptually as well as *in concreto*, maintaining that *existence* is purely and simply an interpretation and the creation of a false fantasy.

The reason [according to them, the people who deny that there is *existence*] is that what conditions the truth of the attribution of the derived concept is one with the thing to which it is attributed. It is not that the principle from which it derives subsists by itself because the concept of the derived form, for example 'manager' or 'white', is a simple thing expressed [in Persian] as *dabīr* and *safīd*. Thus for a thing to be existent consists in its being united with the concept of existent (*mawjūd*) and not that existence subsists by it, whether concretely or abstractly. Therefore, there is no need whatsoever for *existence*.

Moreover, the Necessary Being for the philosopher who holds this view is exactly the same as the concept of existent, not the reality of *existence*, and the

same holds true for contingent existence. Likewise, the same holds true for all of the qualifications attributing to concepts. Furthermore, the difference between the essential and the accidental as far as the derived forms are concerned, for that philosopher, does not consist in the mode of unification in existence—unification which, according to us, is the basis of predicative judgment, essential in the case of essentialities and accidental in the case of accidentalities—since there is no *existence* for him; rather the difference exists according to him in that essential concept is that which is given in response to the question, ‘What is it?’ whereas the accident is that which is not given in such a response. And all of this is mental adventure.

Metaphysical Illumination (*ishrāq ḥikamī*)

The *existence* of all contingent existents is their very quiddity *in concreto* united with it in some kind of union. This is because existence is positive and real, which is the result of our previous demonstrations showing that *existence* is real and is that which is the principle of effects [on things] and the source of determinations and that by which quiddity becomes existent and that by which non-existence is repulsed from it. Such *existence* is a *existence in concreto*.

And if the existence of each quiddity is not *in concreto* and is not unified with it *sui generis*, the following dilemma will ensue: either *existence* is a part of quiddity or it is added to it as an accident. Both of these are false because the *existence* of the part would be anterior to the existence of the whole and the existence of the qualification would be posterior to the existence of the subject qualified. In both of these hypotheses it would be necessary that the quiddity have an existence actualized anterior to itself and that existence would be anterior to itself and both of these are impossible.

It would also be necessary that a certain mode of existence of a single thing would be repeated identically and would also engender an infinite regression in the assembly of the gradations of the individual members of the chain of being. Now besides the impossibility of this infinite regression by reason of established proofs and because this would imply an infinity in act contained between two limits, that is *existence* and *essence*, besides all that, this infinite regression would imply a proof contrary to our thesis which is that *existence* is *essence* itself *in concreto*, because the subsistence of the totality of all existing things in such a way that no accidental existence would lie outside of it implies for these quiddities a *existence* that would not be an accident; otherwise that which was supposed to be the totality is not the totality but part of the totality.

Once it is established (*thabata*) that the existence of every contingent being (*mumkin*) is its very quiddity *in concreto*, then one of two alternatives follows: either there exists between quiddity and *existence* a difference in the significance and in concept, or such is not the case. The second hypothesis is false. Otherwise

man and *existence*, for example, would be two synonymous terms and there would be no benefit in saying 'man is existent'. In the same way, to say 'man is existent' and to say 'man is man' would come to saying the same thing. Besides, it would be impossible for us to conceive one of them while neglecting the other, not to say anything of other absurd consequences mentioned in common books (*mutadāwilāt*). Furthermore, the absurdity of each of these consequences postulates the absurdity of the antecedent. Therefore there remains the alternative mentioned in the first place, that is, that quiddity and *existence* are different from each other in their concept when they are analyzed by the mind, while they form one single unity essentially and in their ipseity *in concreto*.

There remains for us in our treatment to discuss the manner in which quiddity receives the qualification of the predicate existence in light of the fact that the predicative judgment implies the differentiation of one from the other with regard to the analysis carried out by the mind, which itself is also a certain mode of existence of the thing *in concreto* without being itself in act and without something else having put it in act. This difficulty pertains to the fact that each subject qualified by a qualification or each subject to which there inheres an accident must of necessity have a certain degree of existence in function of which, before this qualification or this accident, it is neither a subject qualified by this qualification nor a subject in which this accident inheres. Consequently, either existence happens to a quiddity which exists, or it happens to a quiddity which does not exist, or it happens to a quiddity which neither altogether exists nor does not exist. The first hypothesis involves the petition of principle (*dawr*) and *regressus ad infinitum* (*tasalsul*). The second hypothesis implies contradiction and the third hypothesis the lifting or abolition of two contradictories.

To make the excuse that abolishing the two contradictories belonging to a single level is possible, since it is an accomplished fact, is not useful here because the level at which the removal of the two contradictories is possible is exactly one of the degrees of reality. Therefore of necessity this level must have a certain reality anterior to or preceding the two contradictories, similar to the level of the quiddity with respect to accidents. In reality the quiddity has a certain existence irrespective of the accident and in opposition to this accident, like the body, for example, with respect to whiteness and its opposite [non-whiteness], but the quiddity does not possess any degree of existence when one considers it precisely outside of its very act of existing. Therefore, to compare the occurrence of *existence* to *essence* with the occurrence of whiteness to a body, and to compare the state where the quiddity is deprived of existence and non-existence with the state of a body in its proper level of existence being without whiteness or nonwhiteness is a lame argument (*qiyās bi-lā jāmi'*). And this is so because the subsistence of whiteness and its opposite in a body presupposes the existence of that body, whereas the subsistence of existence by quiddity does not at all

presuppose the *existence* of this quiddity precisely because quiddity does not possess *existence* except through existence itself.

In order to reach to the depth of what is being discussed here, now that we have indicated that the accident of the quiddity signifies something which *in concreto* is the quiddity itself in its act of *existence*, whereas for the analysis carried out by the mind it signifies something other than it [the act of *existence*], we will formulate [the following]: it is in the nature of the intellect to carry out an analysis which analyzes the existent (*mawjūd*) into a quiddity and existence. In carrying out this analysis the mind isolates each of these two from the other and declares the anteriority of one over the other and considers that one is the qualification of the other.

As for the concrete order, in this case, the principle 'that which exists by itself' is existence is because what proceeds from the Instaurer (*al-jā'il*) is by essence. Quiddity is united with existence and it is quiddity which is attributed in predication to *existence*, but not in the manner in which other accidental things which come to be united with it are attributed to it. If the quiddity is attributed to existence, if it is nothing but a single reality with it, it is because its attribution and this unification constitute the very ipseity and essence of this existence.

As for the order of the mind, in this case it is the quiddity which is anterior because it is a universal concept of the mind which is of necessity found in its very essence in the mind without any other existence [existence in act] than its general concept which is a question of thought. Therefore, quiddity is the principle in mental judgments which are related to the mind and not in judgments related to the external world. That is why this anteriority is anteriority by meaning and quiddity, and not by existence. And this anteriority lies outside of the five famous categories of anteriority.

And if you say, 'This abstraction of the quiddity from *existence* through the analysis carried out [by the mind] is itself also in fact a sort of existence for quiddity. Then how can the rule of the necessary presupposition be safeguarded, from the moment one thus attributes to the quiddity a certain and undetermined existence, considering the fact that this abstraction is a kind of undetermined existence?' Then our answer would be as follows: Although this abstraction constitutes a sort of undetermined existence, it nevertheless belongs to the intellect, in carrying out this abstraction, to not consider this abstraction itself and to not consider that it is a sort of existence which would have for consequence the fact that the quiddity would receive in predication this undetermined *existence* from which we had precisely abstracted the quiddity. Now this consideration which signifies that one empties the quiddity of all acts of *existence*, even of this consideration and this emptying itself which are in reality a sort of *existence* without being in act, [this consideration] carries with it two points of view. There is the point of view according to which it is an abstraction and stripping and there is the point of view according to which it is a kind of existence.

According to the first point of view, the quiddity is qualified by the predicate of existence. According to the second point of view it is mixed; it is not qualified by the predicate of existence. It is a stripping from one point of view and mixture from another. However, the position of each of these two points of view does not differ from that of the other. Otherwise the difficulty would begin again from the beginning, in the sense that the point of view according to which the quiddity is qualified by the predicate of existence would imply of necessity its conjunction established with existence and thus the rule of the necessary proposition would be broken. That is because this abstraction separating the quiddity from the totality of the acts of existence constitutes itself for this quiddity a sort of existence, not that this abstraction is another thing different from existence. It is that this abstraction is at the same time *existence* and the abstraction from *existence* in the same way that the *materia prima* possesses the potentiality of substantial forms and others and that this potentiality itself is realized in act for matter without its needing another potentiality for the actualization of this potentiality. That is because the actualization of this potentiality is precisely the potentiality of matter with regard to multiple things in the same way that the continuation of movement is its renewal itself and that the unity of number is multiplicity itself. Observe well the propagation of the light of *existence* and the penetration of its law in the totality of conceivable realities from all different points of view and positions to such an extent that the abstraction separating *existence* from quiddity presupposes the *existence* of this quiddity.

Remark: It should be known that what we have mentioned has for its goal to complete the doctrine which is common among the philosophers in a way that it is in accordance with their taste (*madhāq*) and adapted to their method (*maslak*) when it reduces *existence* to an abstraction operated by the mind. However, for our part we have no need of such delving deeply into this matter since we have established that *existence* is quiddity itself *in concreto* and that moreover *existence* is the positive reality of the thing itself, not the reality of something that appertains to it, and therefore the 'derivative' principle does not apply here. To speak of qualification by a predicate, to designate the copula which comes between the quiddity and *existence* is to speak in a general and figurative sense because the copula between the quiddity and *existence* is of a unitive order. It is not like the copula between a subject in which an accident inheres and its accident, between the subject qualified and the attribute which qualifies it. Rather, it is more like the qualification of a genus by its specific difference in the case of a simple species when this is carried out by the mind analyzing them, from the point of view of there being a genus and specific difference, and not from the point of view of there being intelligible matter and form.

THE UNIFICATION OF THE INTELLECTOR¹
AND THE INTELLECTED²

*Ittiḥād al-‘āqil wa’l-ma‘qūl*³

Translated for this volume by Ibrahim Kalin (comprising part of his Ph.D. thesis), from Mullā Ṣadrā’s *Risālah fī ittiḥād al-‘āqil wa’l-ma‘qūl*, ed., Ḥāmid Nāji Iṣfahānī in *Majmū‘a-yi rasā’il-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-muta’allihīn* (Tehran, 1375 Sh./1956), pp. 63–103.

In the Name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful: Gratitude is for the Giver of knowledge and wisdom, and benediction is upon the instrument of generosity and compassion, and upon his family of Imams who are the treasury of the secrets of the Shari‘ah and religion, and the protectors of the lights of knowledge and certitude.

After that, this [tract] is a magnificent sign from among the signs of God’s wisdom and providence, and a perfect pearl from among the ocean of the jewelry of His generosity and mercy, concerning the critical investigation (*taḥqīq*) of the question of unity between the intellector and the *intelligibilia*,⁴ and the question of whether the active intellect is all existents (*mawjūdāt*). These two noble issues are among the most difficult problems of metaphysics so much so that they are like the two eyes and two ears through the power of which the forms of things are seen. Or they are like two luminous stars by which everything in the world and the heavens is illuminated. Both of these issues have been mentioned in the

1. I translate the word *al-‘āqil* as ‘intellector’ instead of simply as intellect (*al-‘aql*) to convey Ṣadrā’s intended meaning. At times, Ṣadrā uses the terms ‘intellect, intellector, and intellector’ together as a more comprehensive title for the unification argument. He occasionally uses the words *al-‘aql* and *al-‘āqil* interchangeably but there is a subtle difference between the two. While *al-‘aql* conveys the generic meaning of intellect, *al-‘āqil* refers to the subject in whom the intellect functions as the agent of unification with the intelligible world. Not only the intellect but also the person who intellects is united with the intelligible world. This allows Ṣadrā to tie together his ontology and noetics in a more direct way.

2. I translate the word *al-ma‘qūl* as ‘intellected’ rather than simply ‘intelligible’. Depending on the context, *al-ma‘qūl* can be translated as intelligible, and I have done so throughout this work. Where possible, I tried to spare the reader such clumsy neologisms as ‘intellector-ness’ (*al-‘āqiliyyah*) and ‘intellected-ness’ (*al-ma‘qūliyyah*).

3. Nineteen manuscripts of the *Risālah* have been found in the libraries of Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, Najaf, and Hamadān. The editor has used the manuscripts found in the Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh, Kitābkhāna-yi Malik, and the personal libraries of Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī and Āyatullāh Sayyid ‘Izz al-Dīn Zanjānī.

4. I used the Latin *intelligibilia* to translate *al-ma‘qūlāt* in the plural when Ṣadrā uses it as a single term. I also used the Latin *sensibilia* to translate the word *al-maḥsūsāt* again in the plural. I believe both terms convey Ṣadrā’s intended meaning better than their standard English translations.

language of some of the ancients (*al-mutaqaddimīn*). The minds of all the later philosophers were incapable of understanding them as they sharpened the teeth of their language in accord with the approach of those who debased these two matters and drew the weapons of defamation and repudiation. They tormented themselves in [order to] rebuke [this view], openly declaring [their] censure and hate. But they do not listen to the word of (certainty)¹ nor is it clear to anyone of them the reason [why they do this] so that this could be a deliverance for them from their vilification, and an abstention for those who have participated in this defamation. But alas! They have increased their denial and insisted on this in the most stubborn way. Attributing this grave error about what inhibited the perception of the great majority of the people of learning to those who have some experience in the art of learning is a kind of heedlessness and haste, and abstention from the path of proper direction, patience, and fairness. The haste for man is the act of Devil: 'Do not approach the Qur'ān in haste ere it has been revealed unto thee in full' (20:114).

Clinging to the robe of firm standing and asking for the descent of the rain of mercy in the world of lights is by far preferable to promptitude in denial. And commencing [one's inquiry] with the grace of the One who possesses the key of mercy and salvation is worthier than sealing the path of deliverance to the face of students capable of attaining happiness and grasping the truth and what is right. In this tract, we are going to present in a summary form what we have explained concerning the truth of this problem in our great book called *The Four Journeys* as an approximation of the matter to the minds [of readers] and explanation of our purpose for 'everyone who has a heart, or everyone who lends ear, and he is a witness' (50:37). God is surely the guardian (*waliyy*) of innocence and confirmation.²

In regard to the organization of what we mention in the [following] two discourses (*maqālah*), we say that each of them comprising several chapters is pillars and principles for the sciences.

1. The editor's addition in parenthesis.

2. This prelude is a reference to those, including Ibn Sinā and Suhrawardī, who have rejected the unification argument as mere sophistry. Ṣadrā's call for 'proper direction, patience, and fairness' indicates the extent to which this issue has been passionately debated. Cf. *al-Hikmah al-muta'aliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, (cited hereafter as *Asfār*) (Beirut, 1981, third edition) I, 3, pp. 321–322.

The First Discourse Concerning the Unity of the Intellector and the Intelligible, and It is Comprised of Several Chapters

Section 1:

On the Degrees of the Theoretical Intellect in Tandem with the View of Alexander of Aphrodisias¹

The intellect has several stations:²

One [of them] is the material intellect (*al-‘aql al-hayūlānī*). The philosophers mean by the material a subject which can transform into something else either as a sensible or intellectual [substance] through the being of a form in it. The essence of everything, which has the potentiality of becoming something else, has to be actual from the point of view of what it is as a [concrete] thing. Even if such a thing were to contain the potentiality of all things, its essence will have to be itself so that there would not be [another] form for it among the forms. And it would be pure potentiality with no actuality except what occurs to it from outside. When it assumes a form through [an actual] form, it becomes united with it in such a way that there is no duality between the two. This holds true for the *sensibilia* as we see in the case of the matter (*hayūlā*) of physical bodies, which are in and of themselves denuded of all forms. As it is explained in the science of metaphysics, this matter is also identical with these physical species and their simple and composite individuals. It has already been demonstrated that composition between matter and form is a kind of unity, as this is the accepted view among the verifiers (*al-muḥaqqiqīn*).³

The same holds true for the material intellect in comparison to the *intelligibilia*. The material intellect in itself is not an intelligible substance *in actus* nor one of the intelligible things before it comes into actuality. It is, however, one of the sensible things *in actus* and all of the intelligible things *in potentia*.⁴ The soul is thus the form of perfection for the species of the sensible body such as man, which, in contrast to

1. In the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā says that he had a copy of a treatise by Alexander of Aphrodisias on the unification of the intellect and the intelligible without mentioning its title. This must be a reference to Alexander's *De Intellectu* discussed in Chapter I. It is important to note that Ṣadrā mentions Alexander's work after he mentions the *Theology of Aristotle* and Porphyry's treatise on the intellect. This confirms one more time that Ṣadrā reads Alexander through the eyes of Neoplatonism and as supporting the unification argument. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, p. 427.

2. This section is a paraphrase of *Asfār*, I, 3, pp. 428–433 where Ṣadrā's discussion of Alexander of Aphrodisias follows almost verbatim his *De Intellectu* 106–108.7.

3. The term 'verifier' (*al-muḥaqqiq*) and its plural appear many times in Ṣadrā's writings. Ṣadrā uses it when he refers to a specific group of philosophers whom he considers closer to the perspective of his Transcendent Wisdom. Ibn 'Arabī uses the same term to refer to his own school of thought. In its singular form, it is also used as a nickname like 'the verifier' Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. For its usage in different contexts see *Asfār*, I, 1, pp. 55, 59; I, 2, pp. 12, 38; I, 3, p. 311; II, 1, p. 85; II, 2, pp. 35, 87, 95.

4. This essentially Aristotelian idea refers to the innate potency of sensible objects to assume various forms.

the primary matter (*al-hayūlā al-ūlā*), is capable of perceiving all things together. The primary matter in itself is not a sensate (*ḥissiyyah*) or intellective (*‘aqliyyah*) thing. It has to represent every sensate object one after another. The human soul is therefore [like] a form in relation to the matter of the *sensibilia*, and matter in comparison to the form of the *intelligibilia*. In itself, viz., before it perfects [i.e., actualizes] itself into a sensate entity, it is not an intellective thing as it is said in the word of He the Transcendent: ‘People of the Book! You have no valid ground’ (5:68).¹ It is therefore a sensate form and intellective matter, and a material intellect in itself. Thus it is potentially all of the *intelligibilia* for it is capable of perceiving them all.

The percipient (*mudrik*) must be one of its own objects of perception in actuality and because of its nature otherwise its particular form would be an obstacle for perceiving anything other than this nature. This is like the senses that do not perceive things that have a part of them in what they perceive. The faculty of sight, for instance, perceives colours but not its own colour. Therefore the instrument in which this faculty is found and by which perception takes place does not have a particular colour. The instrument of smelling, by which smelling objects are perceived, does not have a smell. In the same way, touching, through which the elementary forms of the *sensibilia* are perceived, has to be in balance in such a way that it is not conjoined with any [of the *sensibilia*] in an excessive and complete way so that everything can be perceived by it. It has been said that whatever is in balance between opposites is the same as being free from them. These instruments, however, do not perceive things that are similar to them in hotness or coldness, moisture or dryness, softness or roughness. This is due to the fact that nothing can be a body, especially an elemental body (*‘unṣuriyyah*), unless it has a share in the opposites. Every natural body is without doubt tangible, and it cannot perceive its like or its opposite because opposites cancel each other out. This difficulty, however, is resolved in the case of touching, as we have pointed out before. We have explained this matter in its respective place, and this is not the place to go into its exposition again.

In sum, the goal is [to show] that since in [the domain of] the *sensibilia* nothing can have potentially only one relationship to the whole because it cannot be free from the actuality of some of them in itself, there cannot be one [single] external sense perceiving all of the *sensibilia*. For every sense is one single form in actuality. But there is among the existents something which is a potential intellect in relation to all of the *intelligibilia*.² This is the case before it becomes an intellective form. Then its existence is a sensate existence, a material form, and an intellective matter. When

1. Literally ‘you are not on a thing’ (*shay*). Šadrā is making use of the multiple meanings of the word *shay* in Arabic.

2. This contrast between the senses and the intellect is a reference to the fact that while the senses can perceive only one sensate object at any given time, the intellect can conceive multiple concepts. In this regard, ‘the senses multiply and the intellect unifies.’

it is actualized in one of the *intelligibilia*, it becomes united with it, and becomes one of the intellectual entities (*al-ashya' al-'aqliyyah*).

Know that there is a difference between the matter of the *sensibilia* and the matter of the *intelligibilia*, which is the following: in contrast to the matter of the *sensibilia*, it is a characteristic of the matter of the *intelligibilia* to come into actuality in all *intelligibilia* at once whereas the matter of the *sensibilia*, in its passage from potentiality to actuality in these forms, is a new thing not in an instant but in time and motion. And this is so for two reasons.

The first reason: the sensible *qua* sensible has a weak existence, in which the opposites take place. A sensible object cannot be a horse, tree and stone [at the same time] because its existence cannot contain two realities [simultaneously] and [cannot accept] the unity of two forms, let alone [accepting] all realities and forms. Rather, it takes on only one form because of its being a measured thing, each measured parts of which are separate from its other measured parts.

The second reason: sensible natures are in constant renewal, passage, and cessation from one being to another. If it were possible for them to be all things in one single substance, they would not remain moving, could not have had the expected perfection [in them], and would have had the intellectual rather than the bodily form.

It has been firmly established and proven that whenever the matter of the *sensibilia* in a certain form has come into actuality from potentiality, it has returned from actuality to potentiality in some other things. This is like the parts of motion and time, some of whose existence necessitate the non-existence of the other,¹ or like the parts of physical bodies and space, the presence of which requires the absence of the other. But this is not the case with the matter of the *intelligibilia*, which, whenever it arises from potentiality into actuality in a particular thing, assumes a stronger relation and proximity to other *intelligibilia*.

The second degree [of meaning] for the intellect is that by which the soul achieves the capacity of passing from primary to secondary [intelligibles], and from self-evident truths to theoretical statements through these primary [intelligibles] obtained by means of senses and imagination (*al-khayāl*). It is through the occurrence of this capacity in it that the soul is able to take the forms of the *intelligibilia* from the objects of imagination (*mukhayyalāt*), and obtain theoretical statements from self-evident truths just like those who have the capacity of arts and crafts and who are able to know their own work by themselves.

The first one, I mean the material [intellect] is like these people. [A better example] is rather those who have a latent [lit., distant] capacity by which they accept the [ir] ability for arts and crafts until they become artisans as in the case of children and those who are as yet incomplete (*al-nāqishūn*) in their development. As for this

1. As Ṣadrā explains in great detail in the *Asfār*, this is a confirmation of the absolute contingency of possible beings vis-à-vis the Necessary Being: they are hung between existence and non-existence.

capacity, it is found in those who have perfected themselves and become counted among the people with intelligence (*‘uqalā*).

The third degree [of meaning] is the active intellect, and it is through it that the material intellect comes to possess the capacity of passing [from potentiality to actuality]. As Aristotle says, this active [intellect] can be compared to the ray of light because the ray is the cause of visible colours *in potentia* in that they become visible in actuality [through it]. By the same token, this intellect effects the material intellect, which is potential, in such a way that the faculty of intellectual conception (*taṣawwur ‘aqlī*) becomes established in it, and then turns material forms, which are potential, into intelligibles in actuality. This third [i.e., the active intellect] is intelligible by its own nature, and it is in actuality whether an intellect intellects it or not. This is so because it is the agent of intellectual conception,¹ and it transfers material intellect into an actual intellect. As such, it is the active intellect because the material [i.e., potential] forms, which are intelligible only *in potentia*, become actually intelligible through it when this intellect disembodies them from the matter that is co-existent with them. Before this, they are neither intelligible [in actuality] nor is it in their nature to be so. Similarly, it is by virtue of light, which makes vision possible and emanates upon the faculty of sight that this capacity becomes seeing in actuality and a source of existence for physical bodies and colours, which are visible in view of it and which were visible before only potentially. In the same manner, light, by definition, is visible and makes things visible. It is impossible for it to be otherwise or *in potentia*. In fact, it is always actual in this way.

When this illuminating and intellective light shines upon the potential intellect, it becomes an intellect in actuality, and when it shines upon the imaginal or sensible forms that correspond to it, they all become intelligible in actuality. This is simply impossible not to be so. Because of this, as it shall become clear to you, God willing, there has to be an intellector here.

Section 2

Concerning that Intellection Consists in the Unification of the Intellector with the Intelligible

I say, and success is from God: forms of things are of two kinds. The first is the form whose existence is supported by bodily matter. The forms of this kind can neither

1. Ṣadrā's choice of words is extremely important for a proper understanding of how the Active Intellect functions in classical philosophy. One of the ways in which we can elicit the meaning and function of the Active Intellect is to see it not as a 'thing' but as principles of conceptual thinking. Just as light makes things visible, these principles make thinking possible. Unification with the Active Intellect means to learn these principles and 'participate' in them. The Active Intellect moves the potential intellect from mere appearances to the principle of thinking. Ṣadrā's phrase 'the agent of intellectual conception' captures this meaning quite accurately. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, pp. 431–432.

be intelligible nor sensible for their existence is the same as veiling and absence because of their sharing in the meaning of non-existence whereby the existence of everything in this [category] is equal to the non-existence of the other, and the presence of each part necessitates the absence of the other. Knowledge consists of the existence of something for something else, and its presence in it.¹ How can then something that does not have an existence in itself be existent for something else? Therefore this kind of forms cannot be perceived except through the acquisition of another form whose likeness is to be found only in concept [i.e., in the mind] and whose opposite is in the order of existence.

The second kind are the forms whose existence is not supported by matter but rather disembodied from it whether it has a relational connection to matter or not. This has two aspects. As for the carrier of the capacity of perception concerning its external matter such as the *sensibilia*, the instrument in which we find the capacity of the existence of this actual sensible form has a positional relation to its external matter, and this relation becomes particular through the attainment of this form for the sense[s]. Thus, these forms are related to their particular and sensate forms as we see in the case of estimations (*mawhūmāt*) and imaginations. Or this form has no connection and relational or positional attachment to matter. This is because of its extreme purity and disembodiment from matter, and also because of its individuation by its particular existence and the existence of its perfect instaurer (*jā'il*)² which does not need any aides from outside and extraneous accidents added to it.

Do you not see that when something from among the physical bodies and their forms is taken to be an individuated unit, it would neither have anything extraneous to its essence nor would the other things around it remain existent? An example of

1. Ṣadrā draws a distinction between the 'presence of perceptual forms for the soul and their actualization in matter'. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, pp. 300–304. In this context, the presence of something to itself signifies the absence of any epistemic obstacle. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, p. 449.

2. The word *ja'l* and its derivatives *jā'il* and *maj'ul* occupy a special place in Ṣadrā's philosophical vocabulary. Briefly stated, it signifies putting something into a specific state or condition in conformity with its essential properties. Ṣadrā divides it into two: simple and composite. Simple instauration refers to the construction of something by itself when we say, for instance, 'man is man'. In logic, this corresponds to 'essential primary predication' (*al-haml al-dhātī al-awwalī*). Composite instauration refers to cases where the definition of a quiddity involves the convergence of both essential and accidental properties such as when we say 'man is rational animal' and 'man is writer'. For Ṣadrā, what is 'instaurated' by itself (*al-maj'ul bi'l-dhāt*) is not essence but existence, because existence does not need an external agent to make it a specific substance, whereas all essences need some cause external to them to exist in the external world. In this sense, essences are 'instaurated' or produced 'by accident' (*al-maj'ul bi'l-'araḍ*). Cf. *Asfār*, I, 1, pp. 65–66; *Aṣālat ja'l al-wujūd in Majmu'a-yi rasā'il-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn* ed. Ḥamid Nāji Iṣfahānī (Tehran, 1375/1955), pp. 184–185; *Sharḥ-i ilāhiyyāt*, vol. II, p. 805. See also Ṣadrā's extensive analysis in *Asfār*, I, 1, pp. 396–423 where he talks about concept (*taṣawwur*) and judgment (*taṣdiq*) as two cases of simple and composite instauration. In using the old English word 'instaur', I follow Corbin and Nasr to distinguish *ja'l* from 'causation'.

this is the following. If we were to suppose a sky or an encircling object with nothing in it, it would not exist because of the necessity of void. If we were to suppose a land or an encircled thing with no sky to raise it up, it would not exist because this being would of necessity have nothing to make it something determinate whereas existence [as determined in the external world] is a physical body with extension. Or physical bodies would have aspects and extensions without something making their aspects and extensions determinate. All of this is impossible.

It has become clear that things of this kind need accidental and coincidental (*ittifāqiyyah*) causes as they are in need of essential causes. That is why this world has been called the world of coincidences (*‘ālam al-ittifāqiyyāt*). As for the intellectual existence, it is not in need of accidental causes that are extraneous to its nature and which distinguish its substance [from others].

Once this is established, we say: it is certain according to the philosophers that the disembodied form as a universal is an actual intelligible form. In the same way, the disembodied form as disembodied in general is either a sensible in actuality or an imaginal [object] in actuality. The proof [for the assertion] that every disembodied form as a universal is an intelligible in actuality is that if it were not to be so, it would be impossible for it to intellect actually or potentially, or it would be possible for it to do so. The first is not tenable because whatever is established in existence is capable of being intelligible, even potentially.¹ The second is not tenable either because that which can receive something as an accident is not established for it in actuality. In the same manner, non-existence is something among the causes of the existence of this thing, either because of the absence of something from the side of the agent or because of the inability of the receptor. The first is impossible because the agent acting upon intellectual forms is a complete reality and essence, in which there can be no shortcoming, deficiency or inability. The second is also impossible because disembodied forms do not have a specific locus. They do not accept or allow change, nor permit the possibility of something that has not been already actualized. This is due to the fact that things of this order are to be found only in the world of motions, changes, matters, and potencies. Our initial assumption, however, was that this form is a disembodied one with no relation to matter, change, transformation, or movement.

It has thus been established that the existence of every disembodied form in itself is its actual intelligible existence. It is also known on the basis of sound intuition that the existence of every sensible form in itself is its very sensible-ness

1. This is another way of stating the identity of existence and truth/reality (*ḥaqīqah*). Ṣadrā insists on this in no uncertain terms: 'The reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of everything is its existence through which it receives the effects specific to it for the 'being-ness' (*mawjūdiyyah*) of something and its having a reality have one single meaning and one single subject, there being no difference between the two except in expression (*lafẓ*).'*Aṣālat ja' l al-wujūd in Majmu'a-yi rasā'il-i falsafī-yi Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn*, p. 182.

(*maḥsūsiyyah*), which is its existence for the sensate substance. Also, the existence of every imaginal form (*mutakhayyalah*) in itself is its existence for imagination. Even if we suppose that intelligibility is removed from the forms which we had assumed to be intelligible, this does not make them a thing among other things like a planet, tree, animal or plant.

The same holds true for imaginal and sensible objects. Their intellectual existence is nothing but the manifestation of things in the mind or in the soul, and their existence becomes an intellectual and intelligible light, not that through which existential quiddities [i.e., quiddities *in concreto*] become intelligible in actuality. The same analogy can be made concerning the imaginal or sensate form in that it is an imaginal light by which things are imaginalized, or a sensate light by which the *sensibilia* are manifested and become sensible in actuality.

When this is the case, viz., the intelligibility of the intelligible is of the very kind of the existence of the intellector and nothing else and, by the same token, the existence of the sensibleness of the sensible is exactly the same as the sensate substance and nothing else, it becomes necessary that the intellector be just like this intelligible, not different from its existence. If there were to be an existence for the intellector and another existence for the intelligible form, which is intelligible in actuality, and thus we would have two beings totally different from one another, each having a separate existence for itself, as most people assume, then this would lead to an impossible situation. Because when we look at the intellectual form and consider it [in itself] and then turn our eyes from the intellecting substance, [then we have to ask]: is it, in this consideration, intelligible—as it was in and of itself—or not? If it is not intelligible in this consideration, then its mode of existence is not the same as its intelligibility, which means that it is intelligible only in potentiality, not in actuality. What we have considered to be correct, [namely the view] that its being is the same as its intelligibility, is contrary to this [conclusion]. If, in this regard, only this [form] is intelligible as considered in isolation from all other things whose existence is different from it, then in this consideration it certainly is an intellector. Intelligibility is not separable from intellector-ness (*‘āqiliyyah*) because both belong to the category of attribution (*bāb al-muḍāf*). None of the attributed elements can have a meaning without its corresponding part.¹ Therefore one single being is both an intellector and an intelligible. Every form that is disembodied from matter is both intelligible and intellecting without there being any difference between the two meanings from the point of view of existence. But there is a difference insofar as meaning and conception is concerned because the concept of intellector-ness is different from the concept of intelligibility. Otherwise, the two words would be synonymous.

1. Fārābī distinguishes attribution (*muḍāf*) from necessity (*luẓūm*). The day necessitates the sunrise but the two are not ‘attributed’ to one another in the logical sense of the term. See *Jawābāt li-masā’il su’ila ‘anhā in Risālatān falsafiyyatān* ed. Ja’far ‘Alī Yāsīn (Beirut, 1987), p. 92.

As for the fact that one single being is the subject of two different or even more meanings, this is not to be repudiated, as in the case of the essence of the exalted One who, with His absolute unity, is the subject of the meanings of His Names and Attributes without there being any stain of multiplicity. It then follows that when one single intellector can have multiple intelligibles, its very existence becomes identical with the existence of those *intelligibilia* insofar as they are *intelligibilia* in themselves without there being any multiplicity and differentiation in existence. The same analogy applies to the unity of the sensate substance with all of its sensible forms as well as to the unity of the faculty of imagination with all of the imaginal forms.

The fact that various perceptual forms, whether intellective, imaginal, or sensate, have one single identity, existing by virtue of one single existence, in spite of their disparity and difference, is one of the wonders of the secrets of existence. A rigorous proof has been established for this and it cannot be denied by anyone engaged in [this discussion] on the basis of the judgments of sound thinking unless one drifts away from this way to another such as dialectic (*jadāl*), imitation (*taqlīd*) and the like. 'And whosoever for whom God has not created a light has no share of light.'¹

Section 3

Concerning the Finalization of What We Have Substantiated and the Confirmation of What We Have Established

Know that the state of the soul in its stages of sensate, imaginal and intellective perceptions is not like what has become common among the majority [of philosophers]. It is mentioned in the [ir] books that the soul is one in its essence and degrees whereas the perceptibles (*al-mudrakāt*) are different in their existence and opposite in their disembodiment (*tajarrud*) and bodily existence. The truth, however, is that every potency of perception is itself the very form of what it perceives when it is perceived in actuality.

It is a common view among them that the soul disembodies sensate forms, separates them from their matter with a kind of disembodiment, and becomes sensible in actuality. After that, it disembodies them with a more complete disembodiment and become imaginal in actuality. Then it disembodies them with a complete disembodiment and becomes intelligible in actuality. And the soul in itself remains the same as in the beginning without passing from being sensate to being imaginal and from being imaginal to being intellective. In this way, they make the soul unchanging, and its objects of perception passing and transforming.² The

1. Qur'ān 24:40.

2. Another consequence of this is what Ṣadrā calls the privative (*salbī*) view of knowledge. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, pp. 286–287.

truth of the matter, however, is not like this. It is rather the opposite of what they have mentioned. It is closer to truth to make the differences of perceptual forms in various degrees of disembodiment and perfection subject to the transformations of the perceiver. That which is immersed in the veil of matter cannot perceive a form with which it is not covered. The fact that every reality related to a species, such as man for instance, becomes manifest to the potency of intellection at one time through one single intelligible form and to the senses through multiple opposite forms at other times, does not lead to the conclusion that in its existential modes the soul is subject to its own changes. Nor does it warrant the idea of making its differences and changes subject to the different states and transformations of the soul itself. This [view] is more fundamental and more appropriate.¹

O intelligent and smart one! Look at the soul, its existential modes and states, and its being united with a group of existents from this mode of existence in every existential mode. It is of a bodily nature with the body, a sense with the senses, an imaginal [reality] with imagination, and an intellect with the intellect. 'And no soul knows where it shall die.'² When the soul is united with nature, it becomes the organs. When it is united with the senses in actuality, it becomes the very *sensibilia* that have come about for the senses in actuality. When it is with imagination in actuality, it becomes the imaginal forms that it has. This continues until it reaches the station of the actual intellect, and becomes the intellectual forms that have obtained for it in actuality.

The wisdom behind this is that when God instated in existence an intellectual unity, which is the world of the intellect, and a physical multiplicity, which is the world of the senses and imagination with degrees, the Divine Providence made it necessary to create a comprehensive being (*nash'ah jāmi'ah*), by which everything in the two worlds is perceived. And it designated for it a subtle potency corresponding to this all-encompassing unity. It is through this correlation that the perception

1. As Ṣadrā explains in the following paragraph, his main point is to show the dynamic nature of the soul vis-à-vis the sensate, imaginal and intelligible forms that it appropriates. Essentially, this is a criticism directed at the Peripatetic notion of the soul as a passive receptacle of abstract forms. Ṣadrā attributes this view to Ibn Sīnā's belief in the absolute 'disembodiment' of the soul from matter in its original state of being (*fiṭrah*)—a view that needs to be corrected'. *Asfār*, I, 3, p. 443. Ibn Sīnā states the same view in various places. See, *inter alia*, his short treatise 'On the Rational Soul' in D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* (New York, 1988), p. 74. Even though Ṣadrā bases his criticism on this absolutely non-corporeal view of the soul, he fails to explain why this particular view should lead to a passive concept of the soul. See also *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (2nd ed., Mashhad, 1981), pp. 195–196, 199–200 and 221–222 where Ṣadrā reiterates his view of the soul as arising out of material conditions. For Ṣadrā's proofs, which he calls *sam'ī*, i.e., 'heard' or transmitted, from the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth* and other reported sayings about the disembodiment of the soul from matter, see *Asfār*, IV, 1, pp. 303–324. Ṣadrā begins this section by saying that 'most people benefit from the transmitted arguments (*sam'īyyāt*) more than they do from the intellectual arguments (*'aqliyyāt*).'

2. Qur'ān 31:34.

[of the two worlds] is possible. And this [subtle potency] is nothing but the active intellect.¹ It also designated another physical or material capacity corresponding to this physical multiplicity whereby it perceives multiplicity as it is. But the soul in the initial stages of its origination is succumbed to the aspect of physical multiplicity due to its deficiency and imperfection, and as such its intellectual unity is only potential whereas its physical multiplicity is actual. When its essence becomes strong and its activeness intensifies, the aspect of unity takes precedence over it, and it becomes an intellect and an intelligible after having been a sense and a sensible. The soul thus undergoes substantial motion from this first origination to the second and to what comes after it.

Section 4

Concerning the Close Examination of This Method and Allusion to God's Knowledge of Contingent Beings

You have already seen that the analogy of the intellect to the *intelligibilia* is like the analogy of the sense to the *sensibilia* even though it is not the case that the senses—faculty of sight, for instance—consist of the acquisition of the sensible form from matter. It is not true that sight takes something from what is seen, which passes from matter to the matter of sight because, as explained before, natural qualities cannot pass from one subject to another. Likewise, it does not mean that the faculty of sensation, such as vision, moves towards the form of the sensible that exists in matter as the defenders of the view of ‘extromission’ (*shu‘ā*) have assumed on the question of vision (*baṣār*).² It is to be noted that vision is neither a mere positional relation to the sensing subject nor a relation of knowledge that the soul has to this material form, as it was defended by the School of Illumination on the question of vision and by people like Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī concerning perception in a general

1. Cf. *Shawāhid*, pp. 245–256 where Ṣadrā, following Ibn Sīnā in broad outlines, defines the active intellect as the fundamental principles of thinking. As mentioned before, this meaning is sufficiently clear in Ibn Sīnā's description of the active intellect as the ‘principles of intellectual forms’. Cf. *Kitāb al-Najāt*, ed. Majid Fakhry (Beirut, 1985), p. 234.

2. Ṣadrā is referring to the celebrated controversy between the two theories of vision in the Middle Ages. While the defenders of the intromission theory argued that the vision of physical objects takes place by something coming into the eye, the defenders of extromission explained vision by something going out of the eye and contacting the object seen. While the first view is usually associated with Aristotle and the ‘naturalists’, the second view is attributed to ‘the mathematicians’. The difficulties and inconsistencies of both views can be followed from David Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago, 1976). For the significance of this debate in the School of Illumination, see John Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients* (New York, 2000), pp. 157–164. Ṣadrā rejects both theories and opts for Suhrawardī's idea that vision takes place through an ‘illuminative and presential knowledge’ (*‘ilm ishrāqī ḥudūrī*). Cf. *Asfār*, I, 1, p. 301. See also *Asfār*, IV, 1, pp. 178–200 and *Sharḥ-i ilāhiyyāt*, vol. I, p. 589. For Suhrawardī, see his *Kitāb al-Mashārī‘ wa’l-mu‘āraḥāt*, p. 486, par. 209.

sense. As we have explained in its due course, all of these three views are false in our opinion, especially the view [that defines vision] as relation. The positional relation concerning physical bodies and what is in them is neither their knowledge nor their perception. The relation of knowledge to intellective substances cannot be conceived in comparison to the essences of material subjects. We have already pointed to a general demonstration that nothing among the essences of material subjects can be a percipient of anything whatsoever except through a knowledge that encompasses their reasons and causes.¹

The truth in our opinion concerning vision and all other forms of perception is that it comes about through the generation of a luminous and perceptual form from the world of the soul by means of creative emanation (*al-fayḍ al-ibdāʿī*). It is through this [form] that the perception and consciousness of things comes about. When these forms are related to the senses, they are both sensing and sensed in actuality. The forms of vision are neither an external matter nor they are imprinted in the instrument of vision. They are rather hanging [in between], subsisting not in a locus and matter but through an active and luminous principle. As for the existence of the form in the external world, it is one of the conditions and preparatory circumstances for the coming about of this disembodied form at the level of the soul. The argument about this form being a sense, sensing, and sensed is like the argument about the intelligible form being an intellect, intellector, and intelligible. The same holds true for all other kinds of perception, sensible, imaginal, and intelligible.

The First Teacher [Aristotle] has said in the *Theology*: ‘It is necessary to know that vision reaches physical bodies outside of it, and it does not reach them until it becomes identical with them. Then it senses and knows them with a sound knowledge in accord with the mode of its capacity [to perceive]. In the same way, when the person who intellects turns his eye to things *in concreto*, he does not reach them until he and the things [he sees] become one and the same thing except for the fact that sight falls upon the external form of things whereas the intellect falls upon the inner reality of things. For this reason, its unity with them is of various kinds. In some cases, it is more intense and stronger than the unity of the sense with the *sensibilia*. Every time the sight fixes its gaze upon a sensible object, what is sensed is affected by it until it becomes external to the sense, i.e., until it does not sense anything anymore. As for the intellectual vision, it is just the opposite.’² (End of his words.)

1. This is a reference to Ṣadrā’s view, agreeing with Suhrawardī, that perception does not come about as a result of the juxtaposition of the organ of perception and what is perceived. Perception of sensate objects involves consciousness and goes beyond the kind of mere ‘relationality’ that Ṣadrā criticizes here.

2. Cf. *Uthūlūjīyā* in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Afluṭīn ‘ind al-‘arab* (Cairo, 1955), p. 117. The first part of the quote corresponds, with some variations, to the *Enneads*, 5, VIII, 11.

Know that through this method that we have followed on the question of knowledge—providence is by God the Exalted and His confirmation—many problems are resolved, and the objections that have been raised against the representation of the forms of things in His Essence, the Exalted, and their impressions in Him do not arise. The same holds true for the impression of these forms upon the essences of these intellects in the perception of the intellects. If intellection were through the impression of intellectual forms upon the essence of the intellector, this would lead to horrible consequences for God's knowledge—His name be exalted—which are mentioned in the books.¹ The fact that the form of a substance is impressed upon the intellecting substance would also necessitate the existence of one single form grouped under two categories, the category of substance and the category of quality. In the same way, the impression of quantity, position and relation would of necessity lead to the inclusion of each one of them under two categories, and to many other problems mentioned in their due course.

Section 5

Another Way of Explaining What We Wish to Establish

An established fact among the majority [of the philosophers] is that the faculty of intellection in man obtains the forms of the *intelligibilia* from outside of its essence after having not been an intellector in actuality. [According to them], this takes place without [the intellect] uniting with the forms and transforming into them. This view is simply not tenable. When the soul is devoid of knowledge and ignorant in actuality, has the capacity of being affected by the *intelligibilia*, and meets the intellectual forms and perceives them with an intellectual perception, we say: when this capacity of being affected [by the *intelligibilia*] comes upon an intelligible form, with what does it perceive it and become related to it? Does it perceive an intelligible form by its own essence, which is bereft of knowledge and intellect? I wish I could understand how an essence denuded of [knowledge], ignorant and not illuminated by the light of the intellect can perceive a form outside of its essence, which is in the darkness whereas, in fact, it is a luminous form in itself and a pure intelligible!

If such an essence has perceived the forms with its denuded essence, then it follows of necessity that an ignorant and blind essence has perceived a pure intelligible, which is essentially separate from the essence of the percipient, in which case we have two essences separate from one another, an intellector in potentiality and an intelligible in actuality. But the two subjects of predication, insofar as they are the subjects of predication, have to be in one way or another equal in existence and non-existence and in potentiality and actuality. It is impossible for one of

1. Ṣadrā does not mention the books to which he is referring here. It could be a reference to the books that advocate the view that Ṣadrā criticizes here or to his own books in which he provides his alternative account.

them to be potential and for the other to be actual. How can the blind eye look and see? With what light does it look at the visible lights and colours? Likewise, with which intellective light does the intellect see the intelligible and luminous objects of perception? 'And for whosoever God has not created light has no share of light.'¹

If it has perceived them through an intellective form by which its essence has been illuminated, then the discussion turns into the relation of its [19] denuded essence to these forms, in that its essence would be dissimilar to these forms or subsistent through and united with them. Now, if it is dissimilar, then the difficulty mentioned before comes right back, and the forms are multiplied *ad infinitum*, which is impossible. If it is not dissimilar, then these forms are by themselves intellectors in actuality as they are intelligible in actuality without there being the medium of any other form. This is exactly what we wanted [to establish].

It is not possible for the opponent to say that perhaps these forms are a means to the soul's being an intellector for things other than itself, and that they are intelligible for the soul itself, meaning that everything beyond the soul that has a correspondence with it becomes intelligible for the soul through this form.² We respond by saying that had this form not been an intelligible in the first place, it would be impossible for it to perceive anything other than itself. The mediation of this form is not like the mediation of the instruments of arts and crafts in accomplishing bodily works.³ Their example is rather like the sensible light in perceiving visible objects whereby first the light is seen and then through its medium other things are seen in a secondary and accidental way. We have already explained with a decisive proof that intelligible form is intelligible in actuality, whether an intellect other than itself intellects it or not.⁴ In the same way, one cannot assume a being for the sensible form which is itself not sensible. It is thus sensible in actuality even if there was no substance in the universe to sense it. The existence of intellective or sensate perceptual forms for the soul is not like the existence of a house, various possessions, and children in relation to the owner of the house, the possessions, and the father in that all of these have an existence in themselves and an existence for things other than themselves, and their existence in themselves is not by itself the same being for things other than themselves. Transformation of the soul into an intellector in actuality is not like the transformation of Zayd into having a property, a field and a child, in which case his existence does not change into another existence.

1. Qur'ān 24:40.

2. This is a response to the possible charge of solipsism where the only thing the soul can know is its own being. Ṣadrā rejects the idea of treating perceptual forms as 'conceptual garments' which the mind puts on things in the external world. Instead, he insists on the autonomous intelligibility of substances outside the mind.

3. The kind of work that requires the actual involvement of the body. This point is made clear few lines later in the same paragraph.

4. Cf. *Asfār*, I, 3, p. 315.

Section 6

Repudiating the Objection Against the Unification of the Intellector and the Intelligible, and Resolving the Doubt Mentioned in the Books of the Master [Ibn Sīnā]¹ and Others

Know that the Master stipulated the rejection of this unification in most of his books, and insisted on it in a strong way. In the *Ishārāt*, he said: 'A group among the ancient [philosophers]² held that when the intellecting substance intellects an intellectual form, it becomes [identical with] it. Supposing that an intellecting substance intellects A. According to their view, it itself becomes cognizant of A. Now, has the intellecting substance remained the same before it intellects A or this has not happened to it [i.e., did it remain the same]? If it has remained the same, then it is the same whether it intellects A or not. If it did not happen to it, then it is not valid [to say] that it has changed into A or that it has become [identical with] its essence. If it has changed into A and its essence has remained the same, then this is like the other kinds of transformation, not like what they claim. If it is [identical with] its essence, then its essence has been dissolved and another thing has come about, not that it has turned into something else. When you ponder over this carefully, you will know that this [transformation] requires a common substance and a composite rather than simple renewal.'³

He also said: 'A further warning: when it intellects A and then B, has it remained the same before it intellects A so that it would be the same whether it intellects B or not, or it has become something else? This leads to what was mentioned before.' End [of quotation].

This is a specific argument for refuting the unification between the intellector and the intelligible. They also have a general argument for rejecting any kind of

1. Ṣadrā uses Ibn Sīnā's conventional title *al-Shaykh* throughout the treatise as he does in his other works. I kept to the word 'Master' to translate it. Ṣadrā occasionally uses Ibn Sīnā's full title *al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs*, which I have rendered as the 'Chief Master'.

2. In the above quotation from the *Shifā'*, Ṣadrā uses the word *mutaqaddimīn* rather than *mutaṣaddirīn* which is the word used in the *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, vol. 3, p. 292. *Mutaṣaddir*, which Ibn Sīnā uses only when referring to a specific group of people, comes from the root 'ṣ-d-r' meaning to come forth, to put forward, to emanate, etc. Goichon translates it as those 'philosophers who advance things that have not been proven' and more specifically those who believe, contrary to Ibn Sīnā, that the soul becomes the object of its intellection. See A. M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* (Paris, 1938), p. 177. Massignon translates it as simply 'professors of philosophy'. See Louis Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam* (Paris, 1929), p. 189.

3. For the quote see *al-Ishārāt wa'l-tanbihāt*, with the commentaries of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūṣī and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī (Tehran, 1958), vol. 3, pp. 292–293. This is a reference to Ibn Sīnā's denial of change in the category of substance. It is to be remembered that for Ibn Sīnā, when a substance is transformed, it does not 'evolve' into another substance while preserving its essential identity. Instead, it undergoes generation and corruption (*kawn wa fasād*) and thus becomes something new.

unification between two things which the Master and others have mentioned in their books. It can be stated as follows: 'If two united things are two separate existents, then there is no unification. If one of them has ceased to be what it is and a new being has emerged, then there is no unification. If the two together have become non-existent and a third being has come about, then again there is no unification.'

Then he said in the *Ishārāt*: 'There was a man among them known as Porphyry who wrote a book on the intellect and the *intelligibilia*, which is highly praised by the Peripatetics. All of it is gibberish. And they know very well that neither they nor Porphyry himself understand it. Someone among his contemporaries contradicted him, and he criticized this contradiction with [an argument] lower [i.e., weaker] than the first one.'¹

He said in a section of the *Shifā'* on the science of the soul: 'One cannot say that the soul becomes the *intelligibilia*. In my opinion, this is something impossible. I have never understood their claim that something transforms into something else, and never figured out how this takes place.'

Then he mentioned the general argument for rejecting the unification [of the intellect with the *intelligibilia*], and began to slander and repudiate anyone who has accepted this unification by saying that 'the man who has explained² to people this matter the most is the person who has composed the *Isagoge* for them. He [i.e., Porphyry] was bent on speaking words of fantasy and Sufi poetry and contenting himself and others with imagination. For this, the people of discernment point to his books on the intellect and the *intelligibilia* and his other writings on the soul. True, the forms of things inhere in the soul and contain and embellish it. And the soul becomes like an abode for them through the medium of the material intellect. Now, if the soul were to become a form for an existent in actuality and this form an intellect, which is in actuality by its essence, and furthermore if the form were to have no capacity to receive anything, for the capacity of reception is in the receiver, then it would follow of necessity that the soul has no ability of accepting another form or any other thing. But in fact you see it receiving a form other than this one. If this other [i.e., first form] does not contradict this [i.e., second] form, then this is really strange for in this case receiving and non-receiving become one and the same thing. If it does contradict it, then the soul, if it is the intelligible form, has become something other than itself. And this is of no avail.'³

I say: this is another proof of his for the repudiation of this view. Its answer will come to you shortly. Thus we say: there are two points we have to know before

1. Cf. *Sharḥ al-ishārāt*, vol. 3, p. 295.

2. The Raḥmān edition of *Kitāb al-Nafs* (Avicenna's *De Anima*) has the word *ḥawwāsa* instead of *bayyāna* which is what we have in Ṣadrā's quote here. I used Ṣadrā's quote for the translation above rather than the original passage from the *Shifā'*.

3. The quote is from Avicenna's *De Anima*, pp. 239–240 with slight variations.

delving into the critique of what the Master and others have said in rejecting the unification between the intellector and the *intelligibilia* in a general and specific way. The first is that existence in everything is the principal reality in existention, and it is the principle of its particularity, the source of its quiddity, and the measure of its essence. Existence belongs to the category of things that allow intensification and diminution in terms of perfection and imperfection, and it has essential qualities and modes in every degree of intensification and diminution as it was different from its previous state.

The second [point]: as motion and transformation take place in quality and quantity, it also occurs in the formal substance, which is connected to matter in a certain way. Motion in every category is necessitated by a single being that is continuous, individual and gradual. [Such a being] has a specific delimitation among the delimitations of existence in every presumed moment of this motion. And it has [this specific delimitation] neither before nor after this [moment].

Once these two principles are established, whose investigation and defence we have presented in detail in our longer books, we say that unification between two things is considered to be of three kinds:

First is the unification of an existent with another existent after it becomes multiple or in such a way that the beings of two things become one single being. As the Master and others have mentioned among their proofs for the rejection of unification, this is not plausible, and its impossibility is obvious.¹

The second [kind of unification] is that a quiddity among quiddities and a meaning among meanings becomes another quiddity by itself and another meaning through essential primary predication.² This is also impossible because separate concepts cannot become one single concept. Hence no quiddity *qua* quiddity can be another quiddity by itself unless the existence of one of the quiddities ceases to exist and another existence comes about.

The third is that something becomes existent insofar as an intellective meaning and universal quiddity apply to it. This [meaning and universal quiddity] is not applicable to it in the first place because of an intensification that has occurred in its existence, and because of a perfection that has come about in its continuous

1. Like Ibn Sinā and Suhrawardī, Ṣadrā considers unification between two corporeal objects as a physical impossibility. In a section of the *Asfār* where he gives an elaborate discussion of love and its kinds, Ṣadrā reiterates his arguments against the essential unification of two objects, and applies them to love as unification between lover and beloved. He mentions this particular view of love as correct but in need of qualification. Since love, like intelligence, is a quality of the soul not the body, unification between the lover and the beloved can only be spiritual and 'metaphorical.' Lest we think of 'metaphorical' as unreal, Ṣadrā hastens to add that 'metaphor is the bridge to reality' (*al-majāz qanṭarat al-ḥaqīqah*). Cf. *Asfār*, II, 3, pp. 175–177.

2. As mentioned before, essential primary predication (*al-ḥaml al-dhātī al-awwalī*) is a kind of predication that is true in both concept and reality. Ṣadrā is referring to particular objects that can be distinguished from one another both conceptually and in reality. 'Man is rational animal' and 'water is wet' are such two propositions, and they cannot be collapsed into each other.

individual identity through conjunction (*ittiṣāl*). Now, this is not impossible. Don't you see that the form of a single man is the subject of numerous modes, from the state of embryo and even sperm all the way to the state of being an intellect and intelligible? [Don't you see also] that all intelligible meanings whose different instances are found in inanimate beings, plants, and animals are found together in man in a simple manner?

One cannot say that these multiple meanings are found in man because of the multiplicity of his capacities or because of a single capacity [in him]. We argue that this is because of the form of his essence, which is already one and implied in his capacities. All of man's perceptual faculties and animal and natural motion emanate upon the matter of the body. The subjects of sense organs come from one single source, and it is [the person] himself and the reality of his essence. All of these faculties are derivatives of this principle, and it is the sense of senses and the actor of all actions, just as the simple intellect, which the philosophers have firmly established, is the principle of the *intelligibilia* conjoined with the human soul. In this tract, it will become clear to you that the active intellect in our souls is all of the meanings that exist in caused beings (*ma'lūlāt*) in terms of veracity (*ṣidq*) and verification (*taḥqīq*).

In short, it is not impossible for a single essence to be the subject of a meaning which it did not have before. By the same token, it is not impossible for an essence to be transformed in such a way that what is applicable to dissimilar and multiple essences becomes applicable to it also.

As it was said:

It is not to be denied for God
To gather the entire universe in one.

The Two Lāhījīs:
‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī &
Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī

‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī

One of the two most celebrated students of Mullā Ṣadrā and also the latter’s son-in-law, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī was one of the most notable intellectual figures of the Safavid period. Born in Lāhījān in the northern province of Gilan, he joined the circle of Mullā Ṣadrā and then spent the last part of his life in the city of Qom where he taught and was most likely the director of the Ma‘šūmah *madrasah*. And it was in this city that he died in 1072/1661–1662 and was buried near the shrine of Ḥaḍrat-i Ma‘šūmah where his tomb remains a prominent site to this day.

Although a student of Mullā Ṣadrā, Lāhījī, perhaps as a result of political pressure, distanced himself from the teachings of his principal teacher and is known primarily as a *mutakallim* rather than a follower of the Ṣadrian school of philosophy. Without doubt Lāhījī was very well versed in Mullā Ṣadrā’s teachings and in fact taught some of the master’s texts, but in several *kalāmī* works such as the *Shawāriq al-ilhām* he rejects the principiality of being. Moreover, in the second volume of the *Shawāriq* he rejects the doctrine of transubstantial motion and the unity of the intellect and the intelligible, both so central to Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophy. As for his most famous work, *Gawhar-i murād*, there he rejects the possibility of both the connected and disconnected imaginal worlds. Yet, in other places he defends some of Mullā Ṣadrā’s theses indicating that in his heart he was still a follower of his master’s teachings but for the sake of expediency preferred to speak more of *kalām* and Peripatetic philosophy. In any case there is a mixture of views in his writings that make it difficult to determine his own position on certain philosophical and theological issues. ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī was at once theologian, philosopher, mystic and poet. His *Dīwān* of Persian poetry is of great beauty and quite significant from both a literary and a spiritual point of view.

He had much love for poetry and was a close friend of the greatest Persian poet of his day Sā'ib-i Tabrīzī. Lāhijī's *Ta'liqāt* (Annotations) on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's commentary upon Ibn Sīnā's *Ishārāt* (The Book of Directives and Remarks), as yet unedited, is considered by some traditional authorities on Islamic philosophy as the most important work of the Avicennan school after Ṭūsī. He also wrote a commentary on Suhrawardī's *Hayākil al-nūr*. But his most important works are those devoted to Shi'ī *kalām*. These include the Arabic *Shawāriq al-ilhām* (Lights of Inspiration), which is a monumental commentary upon the *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād* (The Catharsis of the Doctrines of Faith) of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, a selection of which is included in this volume; the *Gawhar-i murād* (The Substance that is Sought, or, The Sought-after Jewel) which is the most important text of Twelver Shi'ī *kalām* in Persian partly translated below as The Pearl of Desire; the Arabic *Ḥawāshī* (Glosses) upon Khafri's *Ta'liqāt* (Annotations) upon the *Tajrīd*; and *Sarmāya-yi imān* (The Wealth of Faith) written also in Persian. These and other works made Lāhijī the most famous authority on Shi'ī *kalām* during the Safavid period, but while realizing his importance in this domain, one must also remember his significance in the domains of philosophy and even Sufism and gnosis (*'irfān*). In fact his emphasis upon the experiential aspect of Sufism and its intellectual significance mentioned in *Gawhar-i murād* among other works have caused some to compare him to Ghazzālī.

‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī trained a number of students including his own son Ḥasan. But his most significant student is without doubt Qāḍī Sa’īd Qummī, an important philosophical and gnostic figure of the Safavid period with whom we shall deal later in this volume.

Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī

The most notable among the children of ‘Abd al-Razzāq was his oldest son Ḥasan who was also the grandson of Mullā Ṣadrā, as his mother Umm Kulthūm, herself an eminent scholar, was Mullā Ṣadrā's daughter. Born in Qom in 1045/1636–1637, Ḥasan spent most of his life in that city where he died in 1121/1710–1711 and was buried not far from the mausoleum of Ḥaḍrat-i Ma’šūmah. His first teacher was his own father but it is also possible that he studied with Qāḍī Sa’īd Qummī after his father's death. He also spent some time studying in Najaf. During his life he had already gained much fame and is mentioned by a number of his contemporaries as being an outstanding religious scholar and thinker. He occupied his father's position in the Ma’šūmah *madrasah* in Qom and trained a number of students who were to become well-known scholars themselves including his own cousin and Mullā Ṣadrā's grandson, Mirzā Muḥammad Taqī Sharīf Raḍawī Qummī.

Ḥasan Lāhijī was a theologian and jurisprudent as well as a philosopher, and a number of his writings deal with the reconciliation between *kalām* and *falsafah*.

He wrote in both Arabic and Persian and his works are concerned with different religious sciences such as the principles of belief (*uṣūl al-‘aqā'id*), specifically religious issues such as the refutation of reincarnation and proof of traditional doctrines of resurrection as well as philosophical subjects. His most notable works include *Ā'īna-yi hikmat* (The Mirror of Philosophy) on the reconciliation between theology, jurisprudence and philosophy and *Ulfat al-firqah* (Familiarity of the Religious Party) on the relation between philosophy and Sufism. This latter treatise is most likely the same work found in some manuscripts under the name of *Rabt al-hikmah bi'l-taṣawwuf* (The Relation of Philosophy to Sufism). Most of Ḥasan Lāhijī's works remained in manuscript form until recently and only in recent years have some of them been made available in published form.

In the following chapter, we have selected a part of *Gawhar-i murād* in which Lāhijī begins with a discussion concerning the hierarchy of existence, the role of the intellect and reason and their relationship to the concept and reality of existence. Traditional topics in *kalām* such as the difference between philosophy and theology, their definition and relationship between such fields of inquiry as intellectual sciences and religious laws are treated next. The subsequent discussions address the question of emanation and causality as it relates to the hierarchy of existents and the created and uncreated worlds. This section ends with a discussion concerning free will and determinism.

In the second part of this chapter, a section of the *Shawāriq al-ilhām* has been included. This selection represents a dialogue between Ṭūsī and Lāhijī in which the latter quotes Ṭūsī on a particular issue and then responds to him. Such topics as proof of the Maker, His Attributes and His Effects are the subjects treated here.

In the chapter that follows we have devoted a section to Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq, the son of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī. We have selected a part of his *Rasā'il-i fārsī* which begins with an attempt to define philosophy, reality and the relationship between philosophy and religion as well as how the former can be part of the latter. Among other themes of this chapter are the Necessary Being and its Attributes, knowledge of particulars, free will and determinism, and createdness and eternity of the world.

S. H. Nasr

THE PEARL OF DESIRE

Gawhar-i murād

Translated for this volume by Mohammad Faghfoory from ‘Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Gawhar-i murād* (Tehran, 1377/1957), pp. 14ff and selections from the text.

Third Discourse of the Introduction

On the Differences of Opinion among Scholars and Explanation of the Objectives and Benefits of the Sciences of Theology and Philosophy

Know that the nature of the differences of opinion concerning the divine sciences is limited to the field of theology and philosophy and theological disagreements between the Ash‘arites and Mu‘tazilites. However, the method of Sufism is not included in this category, because the difference between these schools concerns the [manner of] travelling on the discursive path and the method of approach and discursive reasoning, whereas the reality of Sufism is none other than travelling on the inner path. Their ultimate goal [the Mu‘tazilites and Ash‘arites] is acquiring knowledge while that of Sufism is union with the One. Now that it is known that the method of the inward journey is posterior to the outward journey, it becomes clear that a Sufi is necessarily first a theologian or a philosopher. Before strengthening his knowledge of philosophy and theology, and, in short, without perfecting the theoretical method, whether it be in accordance with the way of scholars or not, any claim to Sufism is imposture and falsehood.

Our argument is not about the term Sufism and the word Sufi, rather, our objective is the spiritual journey and seeking true union with Him and annihilation of everything but Him and finding subsistence in Him. The famous *ḥadīth* that states, ‘I become his ears and eyes’, alludes to this station. In the *sharī‘ah*, true sincerity and piety alludes to that station. The knowledge of unveiling (*mukāshafah*) that Sufis claim is not the attainment of knowledge without the need for a guide and discursive reasoning. As we shall mention, attainment of reflective knowledge is impossible without an intermediary. Rather, the objective is to witness the result of discursive reasoning independent of temptation, illusion and imagination. The details of this brief explanation are that the more the rational soul is preoccupied with lust, rage, anger and other physical faculties, the more confused is the intellect with the veils of illusion and imagination [in its attempt] to understand the Intelligibles. The more the rational soul becomes accustomed to abandoning habits and ordinary practices and becomes detached from association with sensible and illusory [impulses], the clearer and more transparent becomes its vision of abstract concepts and meanings. The non-ascetic [discursive] intellect, which is preoccupied with conventional habits and customs, and is overwhelmed by terms

and phrases, can understand concepts and principles. However, since concepts and principles are formed in one's mind through words, phrases, terms and conditions, they will not be free from sensible and illusory accidents. Therefore, this type of witnessing the reality of things, resembles a soul witnessing what is sensible through a veil that exists between sight and the subject of seeing. Inevitably, this kind of unveiling (*kashf*) will vary in its transparency or obscurity in light of with the thickness, thinness, subtlety, and grossness of the cover and the veil.

The finer and more subtle the veil, the clearer the witnessing, until a point [is reached] where there is no cover or veil. This is the kind of witnessing by the gnostic intellect that is accustomed to ascetic practices, accustomed to detachment, and purified from the temptations of illusion and [base] imagination. Of course, this would also vary in accordance with the degree of weakness or intensity of ascetic practices. Therefore, although a dogmatic scholar knows [the reality] of things, nonetheless, he knows it as a state of being veiled; whereas a truth-seeking and detached scholar who has turned away from customary practices sees [the reality of things] without any veil. Compared to the first type [of seeing the reality of things], this is like seeing in comparison to hearing those realities.

This is the real meaning of unveiling (*kashf*), whereby things are seen and witnessed without any veil. Thus, it becomes clear that what is known through unveiling is exactly like what is known through reason. There is no difference between the two except in their clarity of manifestation and lack thereof. It is possible for something to be discovered through unveiling before it is known through discursive reasoning; however, the criterion for the validity of unveiling is ultimately contingent upon discursive reasoning. Therefore, if someone claims unveiling [of a truth] which is in contradiction with sound discursive reasoning, he deserves to be repudiated. What we have said applies to an intellectual unveiling. A discussion of particular unveiling and the incorporeals which falls in the category of miraculous wonders (*karāmāt*), will be followed in a more appropriate place.

The method of the [followers of the school of] Illumination (*ishrāqiyyūn*) is not in fact through acquiring [rationalistic] knowledge; rather, it is through journeying on the inner path (*bāṭin*) which in turn is itself contingent upon journeying on the outer path (*ẓāhir*). It is not different from Sufism except that Sufism is in relation to theology while Illuminationists stand in relation to philosophy. In other words, the method of Illuminationists is this: a journey on the esoteric path follows a journey on the exoteric path in accordance with the principles of philosophy. However, when the method is according to the principles of theology, it would be the method of Sufism. Criticism of the Peripatetic philosophers by Illuminationists is like that of the Sufis toward dogmatic scholars on the ground that they have restricted themselves to the outward and consider acquiring knowledge of concepts as superior. In fact, they consider the inward and the seeking of true union which is the actual goal, as unnecessary and meaningless. Criticism by the Peripatetic philosophers and

theologians of Illuminationists and Sufis is that they step onto the inward path without acquiring knowledge of the outward and without investigation through discursive reasoning. In reality both groups are proclaiming the truth, because true perfection is possible only through preparation of the inward as well as the outward, or the manifest and the nonmanifest. However, setting aside the esoteric and relying on the exoteric [leads to] false pride while wayfaring on the esoteric path only without observing the law and the outward, is imperfection and deviation.

In scholarly circles, the Illuminationist School (*ishrāq*) is considered to be a type of philosophy, and they divide philosophy into two schools: Illumination and Peripatetic. Sufism is considered to be a different method amongst other methods of attaining knowledge (*maʿrifah*). The truth is that Peripatetic philosophy is considered to be in conjunction with the science of theology and Illuminationism in relation to Sufism. The first two are wayfaring on the path of the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) and the latter two are on the path of the *bāṭin* (esoteric) as it was explained.

The difference between theology and philosophy is that, as it is known, the intellect has total independence in acquiring knowledge of Divine Sciences and other intellectual undertakings, and it does not need to rely in these matters concerning the affirmation of the *sharīʿah* and the proof of certain principles concerning the essence of Being in such a way as to be in harmony with the objective world. Therefore, acquiring true knowledge and affirming principles of certainty for existent entities through intellectual reasoning and arguments would lead to obvious conclusions that correspond to the nature of things. No sound mind would hesitate to accept it regardless of approval or rejection of a condition, or the intervention of a religion from among the religions. This is the method of sages (*ḥukamāʾ*). The knowledge gained in this way is called, in the terminology of scholars, philosophy (*ḥikmat*) and such knowledge is by necessity in harmony with the true *sharīʿah*, because the truth of the *sharīʿah* in itself is based on and realized through intellectual and discursive reasoning. However, this harmony does not interfere with the proving of philosophical issues and proving them is not contingent upon it. In case of possible conflict between a philosophical question that is proved through sound reasoning and the principles of the *sharīʿah*, obviously the symbolic interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of the *sharīʿah* would be obligatory. In case its proof through symbolic interpretation of the *sharīʿah* is somehow impossible, and such an intellectual question is not one of the questions rejected by the *sharīʿah*, then it would become clear that there is a problem in the manner of its affirmation. It is also possible that the intellect is not correct with regard to the question [of truth] that is rejected by the *sharīʿah*. However, the consensus of all intellects in regard to this question and the inability of everyone to find out the truth is not reasonable.

The first example is the question of the uncreated nature of the universe from the point of view of time; for its opposite is not contrary to the affirmation of

prophethood. Therefore, there could be consensus of intellects on this issue. The second example is the negation of the knowledge of particulars, for its opposite would inevitably be contrary to the affirmation of prophethood. Consequently, the consensus of scholars on this issue would be permissible. This was a summary of the explanation of the truth of the science of philosophy.

Explaining the Truth of the Science of Philosophy

Now the science of theology consists of two categories: one is the theology of earlier theologians, and the other one is that of more recent [theologians]. The theology of the first group is a craft that gives strength to safeguarding the status of the *sharī'ah* for reasons that have been compiled on the basis of obvious introductory principles among scholars of the *sharī'ah*, whether it would lead to obvious conclusions or not. This craft has no common principles with philosophy neither in its subject nor arguments or benefits. Since the subject of philosophy is existent entities (*a'yān*) and not conditions, its arguments consist of those certainties that lead to obvious conclusions, whether they are clear and well known or not. Its philosophical benefit is to attain knowledge and achieve perfection in the theoretical and discursive faculty and not in safeguarding a condition. Therefore, it is obvious that this craft cannot be mastered through attaining [only theological] knowledge.

Early Muslim [scholars] needed this craft for two reasons. The first was to protect the *sharī'ah* from the attacks of contentious people from among the followers of other religions. This was the need of the ordinary people among Muslims. The second was to affirm the objectives of each of the Islamic sects, and particularly to protect the status of a sect from attacks by other sects. Inevitably, this varies from one sect to another.

What we said applies to the origin of the emergence of theology among the followers of Islam. Gradually they [the theologians] expanded theology and did not restrict themselves to merely maintaining the existing situation. Rather, they began writing commentaries and explanations on religious principles and injunctions. They based their arguments on commonly accepted principles and abandoned the straight path of the perfect Companions [of the Prophet's], that is, contemplation and meditation and reference to the learned and the scholars among them. Not only did they regard this method as a way of attaining knowledge, but they considered it to be the *only* way to that end. This concept was far from being valid and could not be sustained. This is because, although trusting the authorities and accepting the basics from them are sufficient reasons to accept emulation, there are [other reasons] for relying merely on emulation and [that is the belief that] it is safer and closer to correctness and farther from rebellion (*fitnah*), deviation and aberration. This method found widespread acceptance in Islam, because people turned away

or rendered ineffective those religious leaders whom God had sent to guide them and protect their cities; and instead, supported and followed unjust caliphs and leaders who had gone astray. Due to their ignorance and in order to manage their affairs, those unjust rulers began to feel the need to train this group of scholars who, indeed, were very ignorant and were masters in alteration and leading astray. With their support, this method [*kalām*] was accepted by the Muslim people. This is the theology of contemporaries. It is a craft, and it is against philosophy and differs from it both in its content and goal, as well as in its basic premises, arguments, and analogies.

On the Definition of Theology

Contemporary scholars have stated that theology is knowledge of the state of existent beings in accordance with the rules and principles of the *sharī‘ah*. With this clause, they have differentiated [theology] from philosophy, since conformity with the rules and principles of the *sharī‘ah*, that is to say, compatibility with commonly known and accepted premises among religious authorities is not necessary and valid in the context of philosophy. Commonly known and accepted premises are not necessarily certain and if by accident they are certainties, they are used as such; otherwise, doubtful premises and guesses are not considered valid in scholarly issues. [That is why] a large number of ignorant people have become religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*), and have misunderstood this clause. Knowingly or unknowingly, they have presented false arguments to simple-minded people [stating] that in principle philosophy opposes the laws of the *sharī‘ah*, and for this reason, refutation of philosophy has spread among Muslims.

From what we said, it has become clear what is meant by that clause. It has also become clear that the method of realization of *ma‘rifah*, in a manner that would not cause confusion with emulation (*taqlīd*), is exclusive to the method of discursive argumentation and the foundation of basic premises upon certainty, whether one calls it philosophy or theology. That some philosophers have committed error in relation to some questions does not justify reprimanding philosophy. Rather, those who carry on the prejudice of certain famous people against philosophy, insisting on following them, and those who regard any meaningless and erroneous statement that has been quoted from them as correct and true, must be condemned. If someone is content with following (*taqlīd*), why should he not follow prophets and leaders of religion, who in fact guide man to salvation? Such a person is not a man of talent and cannot understand true perfection. Certainly, imitating philosophers and regarding perfection exclusively in repeating their sayings, or believing that guidance is found in following them is also pure ignorance and mere hard-headedness. Conversely, on the path of attaining gnosis what is certain is only intellect and attaining realization. Therefore, neither being a theologian

nor a philosopher is necessary. Rather, one must be a faithful monotheist, and in issues relating to scholarship trust the right ideas and in his behaviour rely on the true religion. If one is not aptly prepared to attain true perfection, one must not abandon emulating the perfect.

Explaining the Reason for the Creation of the Science of Theology and Dialectic and the Emergence of the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites

From the time of the emergence of Islam until the era of His Holiness, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Alī, it was not customary for the Companions and subordinates [of the Prophet] to discuss Divine sciences and other religious issues, and engage and benefit from those sciences through studying, debating, formulating, or compiling. During the time of the Prophet on the basis of Qur'ānic verses that were honourably revealed and commanded Muslims to contemplate, think, and reflect upon the signs of [God's] Power in their souls and on the horizons, Muslim intellectuals and learned sages focused on reflection and contemplation. It became possible for those who were close to the Prophet to refer to the eloquent tongue of His Holiness when they faced difficulties and to seek answers and solutions, and then respond to questions and requests brought up by ordinary people for their guidance. Moreover, after the departure of the Prophet it became possible for the intellectual elite of the community to benefit from the presence of His Holiness the Commander of the Faithful, who, in turn benefited common people. However, Muslims were forbidden from engaging in debates on religious issues and arguments about sciences of certitude.

Although for most of his life, His Holiness 'Alī was deprived of the seat of caliphate and the imamate in the exoteric realm to which he was entitled, [he submitted to that] due to certain expedient considerations that were known only to him. Nevertheless, undoubtedly in religious affairs, nobody dared to disagree with him openly. After the time of His Holiness, the Commander of the Faithful, the rebellion of hostile groups developed to such an extent that it made it impossible for the scholars belonging to the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), who were the spiritual heirs (*awṣiyā'*) of that master, to express their opinions in religious sciences and implement the rules of the pure *shari'ah*. Consequently, ordinary people were deprived of the chance to investigate and perform research in scholarly issues and reflective matters, except a handful of fortunate Shi'a who had the capacity to understand the scholars of religion and could enjoy the companionship of those infallible scholars [i.e. the *ahl al-bayt*]. They sacrificed their personal interests, family, and property to be in their service, and decided to devote their lives to study religious sciences in secret.

Because of the injustices committed by the revolt of despotic people following the desires of their carnal souls, other Muslims were not so fortunate as to

receive guidance. Inevitably, they were forced to turn to unsubstantiated ideas, presumptuous thoughts, and illogical assumptions in scholarly matters and religious sciences; for acquiring knowledge is a contemplative undertaking and the intellect [of intellectuals] is independent in scholarly verification. However, a sound and valid idea is contingent upon certain conditions, rules, and regulations that gradually, over the course of time, earlier philosophers under the guidance of past prophets had formulated and worked hard in perfecting. Without persistent work, understanding the truth and following correct [ideas] would be extremely difficult and perhaps impossible.

At any rate, since in their search to find the truth, Muslims resorted to erroneous ideas, and from every corner a man of base character claimed perfection and in misguiding the followers of Islam, the debacle of the Golden Calf prevailed again. The most prominent of these people was Ḥasan al-Baṣrī who set himself to misdirect Muslims in the mosque of Basra and became the standard-bearer of misdirecting the people. In his gatherings where he attracted many students, debates and arguments about religious matters prevailed and differences emerged among them. The first person from among his students who rose in opposition was Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’ who had rejected his response to a question and preferred a different answer. After much discussion and debate, he abandoned al-Baṣrī’s gathering, avoided talking to him and began his own scholarly sessions in front of a column in the mosque adjacent to that of his teacher where a group of students who supported him in this dispute gathered. Differences grew between the two and, in short, debates about principles of unity (*tawḥīd*) and other religious issues, whether by way of affirmation or refutation, became prevalent. Verbal debates turned into compiling and writing books and caused further arguments and debates. Studying and debating of those books became widespread. Rules and principles were formulated and the field that emerged out of this process became known as the science of theology. Since followers of Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’ secluded themselves from others, they became known as Mu‘tazilites, meaning ‘those who separated themselves in seclusion’. This group followed the dictums of reason (*‘aql*). They refuted all those Qur’ānic verses and *aḥādith* that apparently did not agree with their rationalistic ideas and percepts.

The opposing group [the Ash‘arites] apparently, due to certain considerations, advocated observing the exoteric aspects [of the *sharī‘ah*], refrained from symbolic interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of the Qur’ān, and regarded the practices and ideas of the Mu‘tazilites as innovation in religion. They called the Mu‘tazilites innovators (*mubtadi’*) but regarded themselves as followers of the traditions [of the Prophet] and consensus (*ahl-i sunnah wa ijma’*). In order to show how deviated and lost they were, it is enough [to mention that] this group considered rational judgment and analogy valid in minor issues related to the *sharī‘ah*. However, in relation to the basic principles of the *sharī‘ah* which are more directly related to intellect,

the considered the position of rational judgment and analogy to be invalid. Consequently, the majority of them fell into the trap of the heresy of materialism (*tajsīm*), while other followers fell into the deviation of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*). The reason for this deviation in a non-delimited sense (*ala'l-ʿiṭlāq*), was the closure of the door of symbolic interpretation and hermeneutics (*taʿwīl*) of the Qurʾān. However, they took such Qurʾānic verses as ‘the throne stands upon His Mercy’, and many others, as well as the *ḥadīth* referring to seeing (*ruʾyā*) of God and similar *aḥādīth* literally and at their face value. Consequently, anthropomorphism was born out of one interpretation (of the Qurʾānic verse) and corporealism from the other (*ḥadīth*).

In the beginning, this group [Muʿtazilites] was not capable of writing its ideas and substantiating them through reason and syllogism. Rather, until the emergence of Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī who was one of the most distinguished students of the eminent Muʿtazile scholar, Abū ʿAlī Jubbāʾī, they immersed themselves with merely resorting to the more apparent meaning of Qurʾānic verses and traditions. Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī was one of the most eminent Muʿtazilite scholars and had achieved mastery in the science of theology and debate. He also came into disagreement and conflict with his teacher over an issue. After much argument and debate, he abandoned the Muʿtazilite school and adopted the method of *ahl-i sunnah wa ijmaʿ*. He then set himself to articulate the views of that group which were quite unpopular with respect to every rule and principle of the Muʿtazilites, and wrote a principle and rule of his own and those who began to follow him became known as Ashʿarites.

Although a dogmatic emphasis on appearances (*jamūd-i zāhiriyyāt*) dominates most people’s nature, what Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī compiled on the exoteric sciences was classified under the category of speculative science. Caliphs and despotic people often found the principles of this school in harmony with their interests, and supported its followers. Consequently, the Ashʿarite school found widespread acceptance among Muslims and most religious scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) became followers. However, since the foundation of the Muʿtazilite school was based on rational principles, the Muʿtazilites were often were well placed and closer to the truth despite the fact that Muʿtazilite reasoning was argumentative and their syllogism non-rational. The reason for this is that they studied philosophical texts that had been translated from Greek to Arabic through the patronage of the caliphs and found the contents of the texts to be in line with their ideas. They rejected the argument that the foundations of those texts were based on non-Islamic sources with which Muslims were unfamiliar; and accepted and spread the objectives and view [of their authors] because they were based on obvious and proven principles.

As a result, through studying philosophical texts, the Muʿtazilites became well versed [in Greek thought] and became indescribably learned in the science of theology. Since the Ashʿarites regarded any practice that was not customary in

the early days of Islam as deviation, they prohibited reading Mu‘tazilite books and accepting their views. Their persistent condemnation of philosophy among Muslims became so prevalent that ultimately it influenced Mu‘tazilite teachings as well. Whereas advocating hostility towards philosophy in Islam originated with the Asha‘rite school of thought, in reality, however, philosophy in Islam is nothing other than the foundation of the *sharī‘ah* and the mysteries of the Qur‘ān and *ḥadīth*. The illusion of conflict and discrepancy between the *sharī‘ah* and philosophy is based on ignorance and lack of knowledge of both. It is hoped that with God’s grace, in this treatise the reality of [what appears as] this conflict will become clear for people of fair judgment.

Definition of the Truth of Theology and its Difference from Philosophy

From the previous discussion it has become clear that what came to be known as theology had become instrumental in dividing [thinkers] into Mu‘tazilite and Ash‘arite [but this] is not a legitimate and valid science because it is founded on uncertainties, while [its objective is to] pursue the sciences of certitude. Philosophy, which is founded on meticulous verification and complete differentiation between the particular and universal, intelligible concepts and illusory imaginations, matters relating to the nature of things and contingent matters, is not accessible or possible for most people. Rather, adherence to it is restricted to the elite of the elite. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt another method in the exposition of metaphysics so that resorting to it would be easy and possible for the majority of the people. That is the method of symbolism (*tamthīl*)¹ based on conceptualization of intelligible realities in the form of sensible bodies and explanation of universal concepts by means of particular examples. This is the method of the prophets and [their] spiritual heirs (*awṣiyā‘*) concerning spiritual pedagogy (*ta‘līm*) of common people.

The method of philosophy is one of truth-seeking philosophers and people of perfect intellect in accordance with the intellectual speculative ability of the elite (*khawāṣṣ*) and those who are well prepared in conceptualization. Any philosopher can comprehend symbolism (*tamthīl*) but may not be able to symbolize (*tamaththul*). If one is able to provide symbols in certain cases, it does not mean that symbolism can be applied to another case. Rather, as long as what is symbolized (*mumaththal*) is not affirmed by a miracle that is God’s affirmation, as is the case of prophets, or would not lead to Divine affirmation as is the case of spiritual heirs according to injunctions of prophets, one’s use of symbolism cannot be a proof for another case. Therefore, when premises (*muqaddamāt*) are taken from the Infallible (*ma‘ṣūm*) [Imams] by way of symbol, it would be like axioms (*awwaliyyāt*) in syllogism. Since a syllogism in logic is sufficient for certainty, an argument

1. *tamthīl* can also be equivalent to ‘analogy’.

whose primary premises are taken from the Infallible [Imams] is therefore [also] sufficient for certainty. In other words, since a statement of the Infallible [Imam] is a self-evident proposition, any truth claim he makes is the truth and therefore, this premise is also true.

The affirmation of introductory premises by the Infallible [Imams] must be based on certainty. This is possible only when the presence of the Infallible [Imams] is necessary in any given time, as is the case among the Shi'a; for whenever the Infallible [Imam] is present, acquiring certainty in the affirmation of premises (*thubūt-i muqadamāt*) would be possible. However, when he is not present, his existence in previous times would not be sufficient since the affirmation of a premise in this manner would not be possible, except through continuous presence (*tawāṭur*) that is not attainable by anybody. Only if this (*tawāṭur*) were possible, can premises be affirmed; otherwise, there is no other way to do so. Consequently, [the view that] this category, i.e. theology (*kalām*), is acquiring sciences by reason that would lead to the statement of the Infallible is correct. It shares the same method as that of philosophy in attaining certainty. The only difference is that the method of philosophy results in differentiated certainty (*yaqīn-i tafṣīlī*), while that of theology in synthetic certainty (*yaqīn-i ijmālī*). This was the method of early Shi'i theologians such as Ḥishām ibn Ḥikam. His interpretation of the traditions of the Infallible Imams that, 'Whatever is taken from us is good and everything else is condemnable,' refers to the same type of theology that was described.

Shawāriq al-ilhām

A Commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*

Translated for this volume by Maria Massi Dakake from 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, ed. Akbar Asad 'Alizādah (Tehran, 1358 Sh./1980), pp. 238–253.

Proofs of the Necessary Being not Based on the Falsity of Infinite Regress

Among the proofs which are not based upon the falsity of infinite regress is that which one of the scholars mentioned when he said: 'On the assumption that existents are contained within the category of contingents, this requires a vicious circle (*dawr*), since the realization of any given existent would, according to this assumption, depend upon a given existentiatio, because the existence (*wujūd*) of contingents is only realized through existentiatio. And the realization of any given existentiatio would also be dependent upon a given existent, because the thing is that which does not exist.' His aim, according to what has been verified by one of the great masters, is that the nature of the existent is contingent, according to the assumption that the existent is a subset of the contingent, [and it is] dependent upon the nature of the existentiatio; because of its being a qualifying nature, it [likewise] depends upon the nature of the existent, thus resulting in a vicious circle (*dawr*).¹ And if you say 'the nature (*ṭabī'ah*) of the existent'—and even if it is one in itself, it is multiple in the same regard because of its realization (*tahaqququhā*) in the context of multiple entities (*fī ḍimn afrād*)—then its need is not one need, but rather multiple [needs], in proportion to the multiplicity of individual entities. Thus it is possible for it to be 'in need' in relation to an entity which is 'in need' of it, in relation to another entity. Likewise what is said regarding the nature of existentiatio, for what necessarily results, according to this assumption, is infinite regress (*tasalsul*) and not a vicious circle (*dawr*). I say: The nature of the realized existent among all of the individual entities is also contingent, in need of existentiatio. Thus if the nature of the existentiatio is also realized in the context of all of the individual entities, because of its being a qualifying nature, in need of the nature of an existent, then this undoubtedly results in a vicious circle. So reflect upon [this].

He also mentioned that there is no origin for the absolute existent—insofar as it is existent; otherwise, this would require [a situation where] a thing precedes itself. Or from another point of view, all existents, insofar as they have no origin in essence, are existent, prohibited from becoming purely 'no-thing'; whereas all

1. That is, the qualifier can only exist with the presence or pre-existence of that which it qualifies.

contingents are not prohibited from becoming purely 'no-thing'. Through this, the existence of that which is necessary in its essence is established and its basis is what has been said regarding the permissibility of non-existence for all contingents. Thus it is the case—according to the assumption that the existent is contained within the category of the contingent—that the existent in an absolute sense, or all existents, undoubtedly have an existent origin. Thus this origin, insofar as it is one of the existents included in the whole [of existents], and insofar as it is a cause for the whole group, is also a cause for itself, and this would require that a thing precede itself. But if the existent is not contained within the category of the contingent, then it is not necessary that it be an origin for all of the existents such that it would result in its preceding itself.

Likewise we say, according to the third consideration: if the sudden occurrence of non-existence were permissible for all existents [as well as] its becoming purely 'no-thing', then this would be by way of the non-existence of its cause. Thus it [the cause] is included in the non-existence of the group and it precedes the non-existence of the group, thus it precedes itself. And it is clear from this that the cause of the group also precedes itself. It is possible to make this a way (*wajh*), separately, by saying: If the non-existence of the totality (*majmū'*) of existents were permissible, as well as its being purely 'no-thing', then it would be impossible for any one of the existents to be realized because all paths to its non-existence are not blocked. This is in contrast to the totality of contingents, for it is under the [same] rule that governs the single contingent (*fī ḥukm mumkin wāḥid*). The permissibility of non-existence for it necessitates nothing but the impossibility of realizing a given existent through [other] contingents, not [its impossibility] in an absolute sense, because of the permissibility of its realization through an existent that is a necessary being.¹ So contemplate.

Also among what was said is that the existentiator (*mūjīd*) of all purely contingent existents must be external to it, and that the existentiator external to it can only be necessary by virtue of its essence. [There is also] what was said regarding the fact that all pure contingents must have a cause by virtue of their essence and absolutely, and such a cause would be a cause for all of its parts. It is not permissible that one of its parts should be a cause for it, otherwise it would be the cause for itself and for its causes and the basis of both of them would be the fact that every true totality is existent separately, without consideration of its accidental, collective form (*ḥay'ah*). They have claimed that it is inevitable and that it cannot be denied that the existence of two requires the existence of a third. Indeed, the existence of two requires the existence of an endless [series] of things, because a fourth, which is supposed by

1. In other words, were all existents to be non-existent, then no existent could be realized since there would be no existent thing that could cause any other to exist. However, this is not the case in a situation in which all *contingents* were non-existent, since a given contingent could be realized through the Necessary Being, Himself not part of the totality of contingents.

the description of ‘third-ness’ (*thālithiyyah*), is purely relative (*i’tibārī mahḍ*). [But] how can this be, when it results from the consideration (*i’tibār*) of the partial nature (*juz’iyyah*) of every supposed two in the first place, and [from] the partial nature (*juz’iyyah*) of the totality composed from the two? Thus if it were realized concretely (*fi’l-khārij*), this would require the consideration (*i’tibār*) of every two in it, twice, and this is inconceivable, of necessity.

Also among [the proofs not based on the falsity of infinite regress] is what is said regarding the fact that it is not possible for a given contingent (*mumkin*) among the contingents to be the source (*mansha’*) of the necessity of contingents, or for the sudden occurrence of non-existence for them it in their entirety. And this, in reality, is the proof (*dalīl*) that [Ṭūsī] devises. [There is also] what was said regarding the fact that if the necessary being (*wājib*) is not realized, then no contingent is realized, since there is no contingent that is independent in itself—neither as regards *wujūd*, nor as regards existention (*ijād*). Since there is no existence and no existention, there is no existent—neither through itself nor through something other than it. This is also like the previous [statement] in its return to the proof devised [by Ṭūsī]. The basis of both is what was already seen regarding the fact that all contingents fall under the same rule of contingency regarding the permissibility of non-existence and the impossibility of all paths to its non-existence being blocked, by virtue of this [contingent] essence.

Power and Necessity in the Divine Nature

[This is] the second of the three chapters that deal with the attributes of the All-High. In this chapter, there are several issues. The first is that the All-High is powerful (*qādir*) and free-choosing (*mukhtār*), meaning that He is capable of act (*fi’l*) and omission (*tark*). This means that He, the All-High, is such that act might be absent from Him. Power (*qudrah*), in this sense, is a matter of debate between the theologians and the philosophers (*ḥukamā’*).¹ As for power (*qudrah*) meaning that He is such that it would be valid for Him to have [created] the world or to have omitted to do so, in consideration of the essence of the All-High, or meaning that He is such that if He wills He acts and if He does not will He does not act, both groups agree upon it.² The explanation of this is that power, at its root (*fi’l-aṣl*), [means] that a living being (*ḥayawān*) is such that act originates from him (*yaṣḍuru ‘anhu’l-fi’l*) when he wills it and does not originate from him when he does not will it. It requires the validity of [both] origination and non-origination, and the opposite of this is impotence (*‘ajz*). Since [power] is an attribute of perfection (*kamāl*) for an existent (*mawjūd*), in contrast to its opposite, then [its opposite] is

1. He will hereafter refer to this meaning for ‘power’ (*qudrah*) as its ‘controversial meaning’.

2. This definition will hereafter be referred to as the ‘meaning agreed upon for it [power]’.

undoubtedly an attribute of deficiency (*naqs*). The intellect demands the necessity (*wujūb*) of attributing to the Necessary the more noble of the two opposing sides. The men of intellect (*'uqalā'*) all agree on the necessity of the rule (*ḥukm*) that the All-High is powerful without being impotent (*'ājiz*); but the theologians make necessary the occurrence of both His will and the lack of His will, origination and non-origination, in the same matter, which is, at its root, in contradiction to the sages (*ḥukamā'*). For the sages do not require this; and there is no doubt that this is a matter that exceeds the concept of conditionality (*shartīyyah*). Thus the sages determine that the All-High is powerful, despite their belief in the eternity of act (*qidam al-fi'l*), because it is truly said of Him that if He had not willed, He would not have acted.

The Shaykh said in the *Metaphysics* (*Ilāhiyyāt*) of the *Shifā'*: 'Thus verily, it is thought that power does not exist except for the one for whom it is his prerogative (*min sha'nihi*) to act and his prerogative not to act. For if [power] belonged to the one for whom it was within his power only to act, then he would not be considered to possess power (*qudrah*), and this would not be true [of Him]. For if it were something that acted only, then it would act without willing or desiring, and thus there is neither power nor strength (*quwwah*) in this meaning. [But] if He acts by will and free-choice (*ikhtiyār*), except that He is eternally willing, and does not change His will,¹ then verily He acts by power, since the definition (*ḥadd*) of power commonly used is present here. This is because it is correct to say of Him that He acts when He wills and that He does not act when He does not will, and both of these are conditional [statements]—that is, when He wills He acts and when He does not will, He does not act. And these two [statements] are only included in the definition of power to the extent that they are conditional. It is not valid for a conditional [statement] to have an exception of any kind or any implied truth (*ṣidq ḥamlī*). For even if what we have said is true, namely, 'if He does not will, He does not act', this does not require that it also be true to say: 'But He does not will at a given time.' Nor, if it is false [to say] that He does not will, does this necessarily lead to the falsity of what we have said, namely 'if He does not will, He does not act'.² This requires [only] that if He had not willed, He would not have acted, just as if He wills, He acts. And if it is true that when He wills He acts, then it is true that when He acts, He wills—that is to say, when He does an act insofar as He is powerful.

1. In the *Shifā'*: '...and does not change, and His will is a conventional being (*wujūd ittifaqiyyan*) or a change in it is essentially inconceivable, then verily He acts by power.'

2. In other words, the fact that a statement is conditional does not require that there be a situation in which the stated condition obtains. The conditional statement 'if He does not will, He does not act' does not require that there necessarily be a situation in which He does not will. It could be an eternally unrealized condition without the conditional statement based upon it being false. Likewise, if there were never a situation in which He did not will, this would not render the conditional statement 'if He does not will, He does not act' invalid. The conditional statement is valid regardless of whether the condition is realized or not.

Thus it is true that when He does not will He does not act and if He does not act, He does not will. And there is nothing in this that would require that He does not will at a given time. This is clear to the one who knows logic.¹

And he said in his treatise concerning the establishment of the First Origin (*al-mabda’ al-awwal*): ‘According to this interpretation, God, in the creation of this world, is free-choosing (*mukhtār*). For if we were not to say that He was free-choosing, then this [world] would [come] from Him without His approval of it. And when the free chooser, chooses what is beneficial and does it, this does not require that he also choose its opposite and do it too, or that if he does not do its opposite, that he is [therefore] not free-choosing. Rather, choice is in accordance with one’s motives and His essence is [itself] a motive for what is beneficial and so He chooses it.’²

And he also said: ‘Know that [the meaning of] power is that action be connected with [Divine] will (*mashī’ah*), without consideration of anything else. And power in Him, the All-High, is located with His knowledge. For verily, when He knows [a thing], He embodies [it] (*fa-innahu, idhā ‘alima, fa-tamaththala*), and so the existence of that thing is made necessary. According to us, at the First Origin, there is the Mover (*al-muḥarrik*), and it is the moving force and the intellecting force (*al-quwwah al-muḥarrikah wa’l-quwwah al-‘āqilah*). It is in Him, the All-High, devoid of contingency, and it is the origination (*ṣudūr*) of act from Him through will (*irādah*). Thus it is reckoned without also considering, along with it, the necessity of the exclusion of one of two [things]—either that He wills or that He does not will—and this is not like power in our case. For power in our case is, in itself, a potentiality (*quwwah*), while in the First, the All-High, it is only act. It is, in itself, His will and His knowledge, and will in Him is definitely not for a purpose other than His essence; whereas with us, varying goals ensue from our will. Therefore, [power] differs [in us and in Him]. And the will for a thing with us is not its realization (*taḥṣīlihi*). For in reality, the will for a thing is its conceptualization (*taṣawwurihi*), along with the assent of the one who conceives [it] When a meaning is conceived by us, we then will its realization (*taḥṣīluhu*). The conceptualization of it, for us, is the same as our will, but we will its realization after this [conceptualization]. The majority [of people] are ignorant of this.’³

Then he made the famous [statement]: ‘Verily the powerful is the one who, through his will, acts when he wills, and does not act when he does not will. It is not the one who wills and so acts or who does not will and so does not act *perpetually*, even if there are things for which it has been determined that the Creator does not ever will them and does not [ever] do them. In spite of this, He remains capable of committing these actions, such as injustice (*ẓulm*). Thus the condition is

1. Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Shifā’*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Qom, 1983–1985), vol. 4, pp. 172–173.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

a conditional proposition (*qaḍiyyah shartīyyah*), and the validity of conditionality is not connected with the fact that a part of it is true, for it might be true that parts of it are false. Thus it is not required from our saying 'if He wills, He acts,' that He wills in order to validate this [conditional] proposition Power is undoubtedly connected to will, and it is inconceivable regarding the First, the All-High, that it be [connected] to contingency Thus if He acts, He has willed and if He does not act, He has therefore not willed.¹

The Imam [Rāzī] said in *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn*: 'Know that the powerful is the one for whom either action or omission is valid, according to various motives. It is like the fact that a man, if he wills to walk, is capable of it. But the effect of fire on the state of being hot is not like this, because the manifestation (*ẓuhūr*) of heat from fire is not something which occurs by the consent of its will and its habit; rather it is a matter required by its essence.'²

The famous commentator on the *Maqāṣid* said: 'It is well known that the powerful is the one who, if He wills, He acts, and if He wills, He omits. Its meaning is that he is capable of either action or omission. In other words, both are valid for him, according to various motives. This does not negate the necessity (*luzūm*) of act from Him, insofar as there are sincere motives that would render its non-occurrence invalid. This does not require a lack of distinction between Him and the one who is obligated (*mūjab*), because He is the one who makes the act necessary from Himself, in consideration of Himself, such that He could in no way omit it. It is not true that if He wills, He omits, like the sun in its radiating and the fire in its burning.³ He also mentioned that 'there is no controversy ... among the philosophers about God being powerful, but rather [there is controversy] about its meaning as not negating obligation (*ijāb*). [For] verily the powerful is the one for whom it would be valid that an action originate from him or not, and this [equal] validity is itself power. One of the two [either the origination of the act or its non-origination] is only preferred over the other through the existence of either a will, or a lack of it, being added to power. With the combination of these two [will and power], the occurrence (*ḥuṣūl*) of the act is made necessary. Because the will of the All-High is a particular knowledge, and because His knowledge and power are eternal, and not added to His essence, the world is eternal and the Maker is obligated (*mūjab*).'⁴ Thus the controversy is not over the meaning of power, as a conditional concept but rather over the necessity of the occurrence of the concept [found] in the premise [of the conditional] or the lack of its necessity.⁵

1. Ibid.

2. al-Rāzī, *al-Arbaʿīn*, p. 174.

3. Sa'd al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 1389), *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahmān 'Umayrah (Beirut, 1989), vol. 4, p. 89.

4. Ibid., vol. 4, p. 109.

5. In other words, the problem is not with the conditional definition of 'the powerful' as being 'the one who when he wills, he acts and when he does not will, he does not act'; rather,

The commentator on the *Mawāqif* said: ‘And as for God’s being powerful—meaning that if He wills, He acts, and if He does not will, He does not act—it is agreed upon by both sides, except that the sages hold that the will for the act (*mashīyyat al-fiʿl*), which is an emanation of *Being* (*fayḍ wujūdī*),¹ is required by virtue of His essence, like the requirement of knowledge and the rest of the attributes of perfection. Separation between the two is inconceivable. Thus the [major] premise of the first conditional proposition (*al-sharṭiyyah al-ūlā*)² is necessarily true and the premise of the second [conditional proposition]³ cannot possibly be true. And both conditional statements are true in His Truth,⁴ Glory be to Him!’⁵

One of the most knowledgeable of our contemporaries (May God be pleased with him) said: ‘That which is known for both sides is their agreement on the position regarding free choice (*ikhtiyār*), because both of them say that the All-High is an agent (*fāʿil*) cognizant of what originates from Him, and [that] He is not an agent by nature. Rather, what is clear is that their disagreement only regards the manner in which the effect originates from Him, the All-High. According to the philosophers, it can only [occur] in a simultaneous fashion given the impermissibility of a delay in His being an agent with independence. For the origination of act from Him is not dependent upon anything other than His essence, except for the receiver (*qābil*) [of His act], and this is perpetually and eternally realized since contingency is perpetually realized; otherwise this would require a reversal. And the quiddity that receives the emanation of *wujūd* is realized in His knowledge. Thus the act occurs without being preceded by anything except the cause, because of the lack of a conceptualization of anything without it [i.e., a cause]. There is no time or condition or state, since pure non-existence cannot be described by anything like this. And the entification (*taʿayyun*) of *Being*, according to the theologians, is that the motive conditions the realization of the effect, and the effect of the effector depends upon it; thus with His *Existence*, *existence* is entified, and before His *Being*, it is not. The motive is not directed toward an existent but rather toward a non-existent, through the renewal (*bi-tajaddud*) of the motive. Thus it is necessary that the action be preceded by non-existence and this is clear, because it is only completed on the assumption of the renewal of the motive, as is the position (*madhhab*) of one group of theologians.

‘Regarding what is said about His eternity, a particular problem arises from saying that the effect coming from the Perfect Agent does not change, as is well known

the problem has to do with whether the first part of the conditional ‘when he wills’ is a necessary occurrence or not.

1. In the original text, ‘*fayḍ al-wujūd*’.
2. i.e. ‘When he wills’.
3. i.e. ‘When he does not will’.
4. In the original text, ‘in the Truth of the Creator (*al-bāri*)’.
5. See the commentary of ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Jurjānī (d. 1413), printed along with the text of ‘Aḥud al-Dīn al-Ījī’s *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayrah (Beirut, 1997), vol. 3, p. 79.

among the school of the truth-seekers Among them are the likes of Abu'l-Ḥusayn¹ and his followers, for they do not make a distinction between obligating causes and the free-choosing [agent] (*mukhtār*). Non-existence is not realized between the Agent and the act. Thus the necessity of inseparability, in accordance with the first position, which was unique to the philosophers, renders incomprehensible the assertion of a lack of necessity for the effect in the case of the existence of the effecter, as is maintained by one group of theologians regarding the realization of separation. And thus the assertion that the effect is preceded by non-existence is complete.'

Thus, the meaning which is the opposite of 'power' is what is meant by 'obligation' (*ijāb*) and [the latter], in the meaning agreed upon for it, is realized when the agent has no will at all, like fire in burning; or when he has a will, but is incapable of acting in accordance with his will, like a trembling person in the movement of his hand, for example. And in its alternative meaning, it is realized when the agent wills the act perpetually and does the act perpetually, or when he does not will it perpetually and so does not do it perpetually. Thus the Necessary, the All-High, is obligated according to the sages in the latter meaning, and free-choosing, in the meaning opposite it, according to the theologians. In the former meaning, He is not obligated according to anyone. Impotence, which is the opposite of power, is only the opposite of power in the meaning agreed upon for it, since it is not customary to say of the Agent who acts perpetually that He is incapable of the act. And if I meant that He was incapable of restraining Himself from the act, and thus meant that He was incapable of restraint despite [his having the] will for restraint, then this would be outside our assertion, since what is premised as being necessary (*mafrūḍ*) is that if He had not willed, He would not have acted. If I meant that He was incapable of restraint while willing to act, then this attribution (*iṭlāq*) is definitely an error, since this meaning is what affirms 'power' and assures it. Thus how can the opposite of [power] be truly said of Him? What is said is that necessity through free-choice does not deny free-choice, but affirms it. And what I will say below regarding the issue of compulsion (*jabr*) and free-choice (*ikhtiyār*) will elucidate this position.

Thus, it is clear that there is no disgrace for the sages in their attribution of obligation to Him, the All-High, in addition to what is required of them by virtue of [their maintaining] the eternity of the world. Rather, the controversy regarding free-choice and obligation ultimately goes back to the controversy regarding the temporal origination or eternity of this. The theologians cite as proof of the free-choice of the Maker and the denial of obligation for Him, that which [Ṭūsī] alluded to in his saying: 'The existence of the world', that is, with all its parts (meaning

1. This is perhaps Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 1044), one of the last major Mu'tazilite theologians of the classical period and a student of the famous late Mu'tazilite thinker, al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 1025).

all but God) ‘comes after its non-existence’.¹ That is, it is temporally originated, preceded by real non-existence, as an essential precedent, in the usage of the theologians, as we have seen in the examination of the types of precedence in the [discussion of] basic matters (*al-umūr al-‘āmmah*). The temporal origination of the world has this meaning. If it has not been established in what has already been seen in the book, it can only be established on the basis of the temporal origination of bodies and their accidents alone. But it is among those things agreed upon by the theologians—and they prove this, according to what is related by the Imam [Rāzī] in the *Kitāb al-Arba‘in*—on the basis of its [necessary] conclusion, [namely] that everything but God, the All-High, is necessarily contingent, because of the proof of *tawhīd*, and that every contingent must be temporally originated, because every contingent is undoubtedly dependent upon an effector for the preference of its *wujūd* over its non-existence. And this dependence upon an effector cannot be a state of contingent existence with the attribute (*ṣifah*) of subsistence (*baqā’*), lest the effect (*ta’tīr*) upon the existent and its existentiality be a state (or condition) of its being existent, which would amount to the attainment of what is already occurring (*inḥāṣal li’l-ḥāṣil*), and this is inconceivable, intuitively. Thus it is necessary that this dependence upon an effector be either a state of the non-existence of the contingent or a state of the temporal origination of its *being* and its beginning. According to both propositions, it is necessary that the contingent be preceded by non-existence and this is what is meant by ‘temporally originated’. Thus it is established that every contingent is temporally originated, and this is what was to be demonstrated.

Now you know well the weakness of this proof, given what you know from [the discussion of] basic matters, [namely] that the effect of the effector with regard to the contingent is by virtue of the fact that it is itself, not by virtue of the fact that it is existent, nor by virtue of the fact that it is non-existent. How could this be, when if it were the case that His effect upon it were a state (*ḥāl*) of its non-existence, this would require the combination of two mutually exclusive things (*ijtimā‘ al-naqīdayn*), just as His effect (*ta’tīr*) upon it in the state of its *wujūd* would require the attainment of the already occurring thing. [Thus] it does not emerge from either of them [*wujūd* or non-existence]. Because of this, [Ṭūsī] (may God sanctify his secret!) does not hold to this proof and does not mention it in what has been seen.

[Ṭūsī]: ‘Obligation (*ijāb*) is denied.’² That is, [it is denied that] the Necessary Being, the Maker, acts by necessity (*fā‘ilan mūjaban*) according to the contested meaning of it—that is, His being such that action is not absent from Him. This is because, if He were obligated (*mūjab*), in this sense, it would require that the world be eternal, since if it were temporally originated, it would be absent from Him, necessarily. And this contradicts the premise, because [the world] is temporally originated according to the consensus of the theologians, as we

1. Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd al-‘aqā’id*, p. 117.

2. Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, p. 117.

have seen previously. Thus, the Maker is not compelled, and this is what was to be demonstrated here, since theology (*kalām*) is founded upon the temporal origination of the world, meaning all but God. But if it were founded upon the temporal origination of the bodily world, as is clear from the position of Ṭūsī, in his saying regarding the explanation of dependence that if it were temporally originated, it would be dependent upon a temporally originated thing; then perhaps this would allow one to avoid [saying that He is] completely obligated (*al-mūjab al-tāmm*), which would necessarily result in a preference without that which prefers [it]. And this temporally originated thing would also depend upon another temporally originated thing, and so on, necessarily resulting in an infinite chain of temporally originated things, collectively or successively. Both of these are inconceivable according to the theologians, given that in the form of the whole (*ijtimāʿ*), the variant (*mukhtalif*) is also required. One only adduces this proof here because the establishment of the temporal origination of the world, with all its parts, is by way of an intellectual proof (*burhān ʿaqlī*) that is not undertaken in this book. As you know, in the denial of obligation, we cannot dispense with the demonstration of the falsity of infinite regress with regard to conditions and the materials.

The Commentator on the *Maqāṣid* said: 'And the determined foundation (*al-muʿawwil*) regarding the establishment of the powerfulness of the Creator is that He is an eternal maker, who possesses a temporally originated act of making (*lahu ṣunʿ ḥādith*). The origination of the temporally originated thing from the eternal can only be conceived through power, not obligation. Otherwise, this would require the absence of the effect from the perfection of its cause, insofar as there may exist, in eternity, the cause without the effect. This [argument] is not complete without establishing the fact that any temporally originated thing is dependent upon the Creator, the All-High, without intermediary, with the clear understanding that He is eternal in His Essence and His Attributes, and that the world is temporally originated with all its parts, according to what is confirmed by the theologians, or [without establishing] the impossibility of His being obligated¹ or of there being, in the chain of His effects, an eternal, free-choosing entity upon which the temporally originated things are dependent—and this is what [our] opponent agrees upon—or a perpetual movement, its parts being temporally originated as conditions and materials for the origination of temporally originated things, according to what the philosophers claim. The explanation of the origination of temporally originated things and the inconceivability of that which has no end either collectively or successively have already been seen in the discursive analysis of the falsity of infinite regress. And in the examination of the temporal origination of the world, there is an explanation of the inconceivability of the eternity of movement.'²

1. In the source: 'Through [His] Essence ...'

2. *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, vol. 4, pp. 89–90.

The author of the *Mawāqif* said: ‘Know that this proof is only complete through one of two paths: The first is to explain the temporal origination of everything other than God, the All-High, and His attributes, and to explain that the existence (*qiyām*) of temporally originated things in succession without end is not permissible in His essence; and the second is to explain regarding the daily, temporally originated thing (*al-ḥādith al-yawmī*) that it is not dependent upon a temporally originated thing preceded by another endlessly, preserved by a perpetual motion. And after you have understood the preceding discussions, this should be easy for you [to understand].’¹

Thus, if it is said [that] this proof cannot be executed, from the perspective of Ṭūsī, who maintains the impossibility of a preference without one who prefers (*murajjih*), since it is possible to raise against it the objection that His effect upon the world, if it were not through obligation, would require a dependence upon a temporally originated matter—indeed [it would require maintaining] that the world is eternal, or else [maintaining] the dependence of one temporally originated matter upon something other than what is stated in the proof—then I answer by [saying] that the objection is removed from Ṭūsī, since he forbade the necessity of preference without one who prefers, because [he deemed] it permissible that the basis of preference be the Agent’s knowledge of the benefit.

And know that here there is a another controversy, and it is this: Is it necessary from God, the All-High, through [His] knowledge and will, that a thing be such that its non-appearance would be impossible after the connection of these two with it or not? The sages and the truth-seekers among the theologians, such as Ṭūsī, maintain the first, because of what we have seen by way of the fact that the thing, insofar as it is not necessary, does not exist because of the impossibility of preference without one who prefers. Al-Ash‘arī and those who follow him in the permissibility of preference without one who prefers maintain the second. Thus according to them, it is permissible that omission may occur in place of the action at a time determined for the act [to happen]; and this is impossible according to others. The difference between the sages and Ṭūsī and those like him regarding this issue is that according to the sages, the will of the Creator, the All-High, has been connected to the existentionation of the world from eternity. Thus the necessity of its existence is by virtue of an eternal will that is identical with His Essence, the All-High. Therefore it is impossible, in consideration of this connection, for the omission to occur, even if it is possible in the absence of this consideration. According to Ṭūsī and others, the Essential Will, and the knowledge of the benefit of the existentionation of the world were connected at a specific point in time and after their connection, the non-appearance [of it] was impossible. This is also one of those things that confirms what we have mentioned regarding the denouncing of the sages. So contemplate.

1. ‘Aḍud al-Dīn Ījī (d. 1355), *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayrah (Beirut, 1997), vol. 3, p. 73.

[Ṭūsī]: 'And the intermediary is not intelligible.'¹ [This is] an answer to a [particular] issue. It is that the temporal origination of the world indicates nothing except that the effector of it without intermediary is free-choosing; this is not what is to be demonstrated. For it is permissible that the Necessary, the Most High, be the effector in the world through a contingent intermediary originating from Him through necessity which is an effector in the world through choice (*bi'l-ikhtiyār*). Thus the free-choice of the Most Exalted is not established by this. The confirmation of the answer, according to what has been confirmed by the commentators, is that this intermediary is also of the world, because the meaning of [the world] is 'all that is other than God', and an intermediate position between itself and Him, the All-High, is not intelligible. This confirmation is not appropriate, according to Ṭūsī, insofar as it explains nothing but the temporal origination of bodies and their accidents and their souls. And he permits the existence of the pure, intellectual substances, when he said previously: 'And as for the intellect,² a proof has not been established for its impossibility.' Thus he allows that the intermediary [might] be among these substances. And as for what was said, [namely] that Ṭūsī did not permit the eternity of the pure thing (*al-mujarrad*), indeed of its *wujūd*, and that his previous words: 'And there is no eternal thing except God, the All-High' indicate its temporal origination on the assumption of its *wujūd*, this is [a] weak [argument], since the permissibility of its *wujūd* requires the permissibility of its eternity, since, just as the impossibility of its *being* is not established, the impossibility of its eternity is likewise not established for its *wujūd* either. And the meaning of his words: 'there is no eternal thing except God' is: there is no eternal thing definitively established, as we have seen here.

Thus what is correct is that this answer confirms the fact that the origination of the temporally originated world from the intermediary is only permissible through a temporally originated will (*irādah ḥādithah*) which is not dependent upon the Necessary, the obligated, *al-wājib al-mūjab* as a postulated premise (*bi'l-farḍ*), because the dependence of the temporally originated thing upon the eternal, the obligated is not possible except through an eternal motion and this is denied for the temporal origination of the bodily world. And this—that is, the temporal origination of the will without a dependence upon the Necessary—is not intelligible, because of it would therefore be temporally originated without cause (*bi-lā sabab*) or with infinitely regressing purposes (*bi-asbāb al-musalsalah*), and both of these are inconceivable. These words of Ṭūsī are what supplement the proof. For verily because the temporal origination of anything other than the bodily world is not established according to him, the explanation is dependent upon the falsity of

1. Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, p. 117.

2. Intellect, according to Islamic cosmology, is the first thing God created; and as an immaterial reality by definition, it can be considered an intermediate reality between God and material or bodily creation.

infinite regress regarding the conditions (*shurūṭ*), and upon the denial of a pure, eternal thing among the contingents whose effect (*ta’thīr*) upon the bodily world would be by free choice, without dependence upon the Necessary. Since with the permissibility of the infinite regress mentioned, or its falsity, along with the permissibility of an intermediary such as that described, the dependence of the temporally originated thing on the obligated is not impossible. But the first—that is, the falsity of infinite regress—is absolute, [as] has been seen. Thus he alludes here to the denial of the mentioned intermediary as well, in order to complete the proof of the denial of obligation, and this represents the ultimate conclusion of this position.

Then, the Imam Rāzī answered this question in the *Muḥaṣṣal* by saying: ‘As for this intermediary, the Muslims agree upon its falsity.’¹ Ṭūsī argued against it in the *Naqḍ* that your Shaykh, al-Ash‘arī, and those who agree with him claim that God, the All-High, is an essence such that the perpetuity (*dawām*) of its *wujūd* and the continuation of it are not obligatory. Indeed He needs, in this regard, an essence in addition to the perpetuity of His *wujūd*, not through it. They call this essence an attribute and they explain this through the fact that the essence of the All-High is contingent, not perpetual in itself. Thus either your master and his followers differ from the consensus of the Muslims or the question is validly posed. And it can be said that the meaning [of this] is that the consensus concerns the falsity of this intermediary on the basis of its being described as an intermediary, and he does not refute this, so ponder this.

But the saying (*kalām*) regarding the conclusion of this consensus and the ultimate realization that the role of Creator—meaning the one uniquely responsible for the arrangement (*tadbīr*) of affairs in the world—is limited to God, the All-High, is collectively agreed upon among the Muslims; indeed it is one of the requirements (*ḍarūriyyāt*) of religion. In fact, there is no dispute among any of the learned (*‘uqalā’*) among the philosophers and others regarding this. The sages who speak of the separate substances that play an active role in the arrangement of matters in the world consider them to be subject to the wisdom of God, the All-High, and they do not consider them to be independent in the organization and administration (*taṣarruf*) [of matters] in this world. And perhaps this is the intended meaning of the Commentator on the *Maqāṣid* in his saying: ‘and the opponent agrees with us in this,’ as we have related from him previously. This is one of the possibilities of the saying (*kalām*) of Ṭūsī—that is, his saying that an independent intermediary in the arrangement of matters in the bodily world is not intelligible. That is, even if one of the intelligent ones had taken this position, and even if the inclination toward this possibility and toward the first possibility (to which Ṭūsī seems inclined) were the same in their ultimate realization, Ṭūsī’s formulation of the two inclinations (*tawjīhihima*) may be found to be far from it, because he rejects the possibility of

1. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa’l-muta’akhhirīn min al-‘ulamā’ wa’l-ḥukamā’ wa’l-mutakallimīn* (Cairo, 1978), p. 163.

saying that the Necessary, the All-High, is intermediate between being obligated and free-choosing. [This is] because the meaning of obligation is what we know from beings in nature, and it is undoubtedly denied for Him, the All-High. And [the meaning of] choice is what we know from animals and this is also denied for Him, the All-High, because the choice of animals is contingent and the choice of the All-High is Necessary, necessarily. Thus it is an intermediary between the obligated (*mūjab*), which we understand, and the confirmation of the objection that there is no meaning to 'intermediary' between the obligated and the free-choosing, for verily the free-chooser is not agent by choice whether his choice be necessary or contingent. Do you not see that the rest of the attributes of the All-High are not like our attributes? Thus it does not require the establishment of an intermediary, or likewise, [the establishment of] free-choice.

And among [the possibilities of Ṭūsī's *kalām*] is that the result (*ḥāṣil*) of this *kalām* is that to the extent that the temporal origination of the world is established, obligation is denied; and to the extent that obligation is denied, choice is established, since there is no intermediary between obligation and choice. Thus when one of the two is denied, the other is established. This is because the existentiator (*mūjid*) of a thing is either such that its effect (*athar*) may be absent, in which case he is free-choosing, or not, in which case he is obligated; and there is no intermediate point between denial and affirmation.

And among [the possibilities] is that he rejects what the Ash'arites maintain, [namely]: that He, the All-High, is obligated with regard to some of what originates from Him, and these are His attributes; and that He is free-choosing with regard to other things, and these are His acts. Thus there is an intermediary between the absolutely obligated and the absolutely free-choosing entity, and it is obvious that this is not intelligible.

PERSIAN TREATISES

Rasā'il-i fārsī

Translated for this volume by Mohammad Faghfoory from Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Lāhijī, *Rasā'il-i fārsī*, ed. 'Alī Ṣadrā'ī Khu'ī (Tehran, 1995), pp. 73–91.

Chapter One

On the Exposition of What They Have Said on the Definition of the Reality of Philosophy and its Merits

These issues will be explained in three parts.

Part One

On the Definition of Philosophy and Explanation of its Reality

Know that the science of philosophy is a well-known science and a craft and art (*fann*) from among the crafts and arts (*funūn*). As its definition is well known in the world, its reality is concerned with knowing the truth of existent things in the external world by means of certain guides. According to this definition, there are two types of philosophy: the first is the knowledge of the reality of existents whose existence does not depend on [man's] will and action. This category is called theoretical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i naẓarī*). Its benefit is to know God, and to know the reality of the universe that is the act of God. The second type of philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of those things whose existence is dependent on the will and the power of man, that is, human acts and deeds. This is called practical philosophy (*ḥikmat-i amalī*). Its benefit is asceticism and the training of man in a manner that would bring goodness and wholesomeness (*ṣalāḥ*) in this world and in the Hereafter, and would guide him to attain the highest degrees of perfection.

Anyone who has briefly scrutinized the writings and sayings of the philosophers knows that their work and approach is that first they think and meditate about the reality of all existents in the world, whether they be elemental, heavenly, spiritual, physical, simple or compound, substance or accident, or whatever else [it might be]. Then, every individual philosopher learns the outward and inward aspects of existents in accordance with his ability and intellectual faculty and cognition. When he sees signs of weakness, imperfection, and need in all of them, he explains them with certainty without any doubt or hesitation. Hence, [he realizes that] it is necessary for the world to have a Cause and a Maker (*ṣāni'*) who is sacred and free from any kind of imperfection, shortcoming, and weakness. For if the Maker suffers from these imperfections, He would be like others and

would not have the qualifications to become the Principle and the Origin of all these [beings].

Subsequently, when a philosopher observes in the existents in the world such qualities as knowledge, power, potency, majesty, dominance, and other forms of virtue and honour whose enumeration is difficult and perhaps even impossible, he concludes that by necessity the Maker of the world possesses all qualities of perfection and beauty in a manner that makes Him the Absolutely Perfect and superior to all. Nothing has the ability to resemble Him in any manner or quality. Otherwise, He would be like one of them, and would not have superiority over other existents to qualify to be the Principle and the Origin of all things.

After this [initial observation], philosophers then say that among all engendered species man is the noblest and the most virtuous of all. He has the capability to advance to the highest degrees of virtue and perfection, and is able to ascend to Divine proximity and witness the Creator; dissimilar [to everything else] is He. One cannot advance toward those exalted planes by oneself, because of the presence of ignorance, weakness, and [other] impediments that cannot be enumerated in this treatise. Therefore, Divine Providence and Wisdom necessitate that He would choose and send prophets in order to guide mankind and help them attain perfection. After prophets, he assigns Imams and caliphs [of God] and helps them all with perfect reason and clear miracles so that nobody can bring any excuse or scapegoat before them. Otherwise, the reality of man, the noblest of all creatures, would become null and void, and would inevitably lead to the conclusion that the creation of the universe by the Wise, Most Omnipotent, and the Perfect Lord is useless and meaningless.

In this way philosophers prove the necessity of the Day of Judgment, punishment and reward and other issues concerning prophethood and imamate and explain all the details of speculative and practical philosophy. The question of the belief that philosophers deny bodily resurrection, will be explained later, God willing.

Part Two

On the Exposition of the Virtues of Philosophy and its Relation to Religion

Now that the reality of philosophy has become known, know as to why those who ascribe to philosophy the claim that this science is the noblest of all sciences and more virtuous than all crafts from the point of view of reason as well as religion. From the point of view of reason it is obvious and clear and there is no doubt in anybody's mind that knowing God, Exalted is He, and worshipping Him are the best bounties of both worlds.

Nearness and intimacy with His Sacred Being are the best joy of all possible joys. Not only that, but this precious bounty and exalted joy is a means toward other bounties and mercy, and a protection against and substitute for all sufferings and

hardships of this world and the Hereafter. For the good and evil of the entire universe is under the control of the power and will of the One who is deservedly praised and wise in a non-delimited sense. Obviously, He would not take away any good things from His friends and acquaintances, unless it were evil and harmful [to them], and would not be content with any 'evil' [for them] unless it were for their good.

If He grants bounties and shows mercy to enemies and strangers, of course it would burden them with obligation. It is also obvious that worship, nearness to and intimacy with Him are in proportion to love; and love is in proportion to knowledge and recognition.

One should know that knowledge of God, Exalted is He, is possible in two ways: The first is through observing the subtle arts and the examination of His noble acts. The second is by listening to supreme prayers and the Most Beautiful Names (*asmā' al-ḥusnā*). One should also realize that knowing a craftsman by observing his crafts is much better than knowing him by hearing about his attributes. In addition, the more awareness, mastery, and reflection one shows in one's observations, and the nobler, better, and more numerous those arts may be, the more intense will be the recognition and knowledge that results from such observations and better in proportion to the quality of observation.

For example, somebody may possess mastery in all kinds of sciences such as the science of grammar, jurisprudence, theology, astronomy and other important sciences. He may have qualities such as wholesomeness, piety, obedience and beautiful traits, and skill in poetry, calligraphy, and writing and other minor virtues and ordinary qualities and be a master in all these fields. Now, if someone else who is himself a master in these arts and crafts examines him carefully and patiently, and recognizes his superiority in all these traits and qualities, the recognition and knowledge of such a person about the other person will be much better and deeper than that of an ordinary person who would know the subject without knowing the qualities that were just mentioned. Therefore, if one thinks carefully and contemplates wisely upon the manifest and non-manifest realities, attachments, limitations, and benefits of all kinds and species in the universe, whether particular or universal, low or exalted, corporeal or spiritual, obviously such a person's knowledge about the power, wisdom, majesty, dominance, generosity, charity, and other infinitely beautiful and majestic traits of the Divine (Most Sacred is He) which are beyond limits and more numerous than what numbers can describe, is better and far deeper than the knowledge of other people who are content by hearing and emulating, or observing some manifestations of [this] power.

Take for example just one species from among all species of animals or plants that are the simplest species and kinds in their own category. If one looks at its appearance and outward aspects, one realizes that it has a Creator. Someone else may contemplate and think about all its external and internal organs pertaining to the way it finds nutrients, or grows and produces, or perceives and senses. He

may think about the use and benefits of each species, good causes and subtle governance in their composition and mixture with other species, things by which the finest intellects are bewildered and incapable of understanding. If it is the power and mercy of the Creator—exalted is His status and manifested is His reason (*burhān*)—that helps one learn the vastness and majesty of all this. Obviously then, knowledge about other species, types of Divine arts and sensible creatures and their containment and enumeration are not possible except by the knowledge and power of God. Now, are these two individuals alike? Never. How can imagination dare to indulge in this illusion and the tongue possess the power to make such a claim? This was just an allusion to the nobility of this science from the point of view of the intellect.

Now, from the point of view of the *sharī‘ah*, you learned that the reality of philosophy is acquiring knowledge about God through thinking and reflection upon His creation. If one thinks further and is objective, one will learn that this is the same undertaking that is praised and commanded in many traditions and in the majestic Qur’ān, and abandoning it has been condemned. Although it is beyond the scope of this and other similar treatises to explain them in detail, a brief summary of [the content] of noble verses is presented below.

Indeed in the creation of the earth and the heaven, deserts and oceans, wind and rain, streams and rivers, trees and [their] fruits, and other higher and lower universes, there are numerous obvious reasons and incalculable candid causes which affirm for people of intellect, reflection, honesty, and objectivity, the unity and majesty of God, the wisdom and power of the Glorious Creator (*Ṣāni‘-i majīd*) the One Creator. The following is an example of traditions which are presented here from among many traditions quoted from the *ahl al-bayt*, (May God’s blessings be upon them).

It is narrated from His Holiness Imam Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (May God’s greetings be upon him) who said: ‘The best of all kind of worship is reflection and thinking to know God and His Power and craft (*ṣan‘at*), Exalted is He.’ It is also reported that His Holiness Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far al-Kāẓim once said: ‘Indeed God, Exalted is He, perfected His prophets and friends (*awliyā‘*) who are His proofs for the people of intellect. He helped them with the utmost degree of nobility in [their] reasoning and argumentation, and guided them with sound and upright reasons which are signs of His power and mercy, to His Lordship.’

In addition, God provided some of the noble verses [of the Qur’ān], whose contents were mentioned before, as witness to the validity of His guiding sayings. There are many verses and traditions to this effect and no one can doubt this [matter] in any possible way. Therefore, if the task of the philosopher is praising these affairs in the upright religion, by necessity this task is one of the components of religion and perhaps the best part of it. [This is so] because Divine wisdom and mercy apply to the followers of this exalted religion and all other religions through

three principles of command and prohibition, religiously permissible and forbidden acts, and finally reward and punishment.

The First are injunctions pertaining to knowledge (*ma'rifah*) such as belief in the Unity of God and prophethood, and other related beliefs concerning this world and the Hereafter. The second are injunctions pertaining to ethics and moral traits, such as trustworthiness, generosity, justice, and the like. The third are injunctions pertaining to rituals and actions, such as daily prayers, almsgiving, fasting and struggle on the path or religion, and other similar acts and behaviours.

Undoubtedly, from the point of view of the *shari'ah* as well as the intellect, this meaning is clear and obvious that knowledge and faith, and good and evil are nobler and superior to ethical actions and deeds in relation to truth and falsehood. In addition, ethics is the prerequisite of and superior to action. It is primarily for this reason that faith or unbelief, and deserving heaven and hell are realized through faith or its denial.

There have been many traditions narrated that, 'if you ever see one who performs rituals such as fasting and daily prayers, and who lengthens bowing and prostrating [in daily prayers], do not be fooled by him. Rather, scrutinize the degree of his intellect, knowledge, ethics, and character traits. And examine his honesty and religiosity.' This notion manifests itself perfectly in relation to one's intellect as well. That is to say, a man who possesses knowledge but lacks ethics and good deeds is much better than an ignorant man who has good ethics and deeds. By the same token, the possessor of good traits is much better than the ignorant one who does not possess the virtues of a man who performs daily prayers and fasts, because good deeds and traits also deserve rewards and blessings in consideration of intellect and knowledge.

It has been reported that, 'An angel came across a worshipper and was astonished by the extent of his prayer and worshipping. The angel asked the Merciful Throne of God to be informed of the degree of the man's rewards and blessings and when he received permission and was informed, he realized that the man's reward was much less in proportion to his worshipping. He was surprised at this strange mystery. The angel was told to talk to the man and test his intellect. So he descended and began talking to the man. In the midst of their conversation, he told the man what a wonderful and clean place he had. The worshipping man replied, "It would have been nice if God had a donkey and I could have him graze in this place so that such fine grass and water would not be wasted". The angel asked him in a sarcastic way "Does not God have a donkey?" Then he ascended to Heaven. A command came that the reward and blessing of prayers are in proportion to one's intellect.' It has also been narrated that, 'Two prayers by the man of knowledge are better than one thousand prayers by an [ordinary] worshipper.' There are many other narrations to this effect.

Therefore, if knowledge in general is better and nobler than good traits and deeds, it is obvious that the kind of knowledge which is the result of reflection and

thinking about all species and nonmanifest aspects of existent beings is superior to other types of knowledge. Similarly, as good traits and ethics are superior to good deeds and acts, knowledge of good traits and ethics is superior and nobler than the knowledge of [only] deeds and acts.

Part Three

On Several Questions Pertaining to this Station and Their Answers

First Question: *How is it possible that philosophy is part of religion while this art preceded religion and its advocates are not prophets?*

The answer is that the first two parts of religion include beliefs and ethics, such as Divine Unity, Divine justice, the necessity of prophethood, the states of the heavens and earth, day and night and similar issues that are indications and signs of Divine knowledge, or the beauty of justice, honesty, bravery, generosity, and the like, or the ugliness of injustice, lying, cowardliness, and jealousy (*bukhl*). Since these all belong to the universal and permanent affairs of the world, they do not change in accordance with time and people's customs. Therefore, these two categories would not vary in different religions and creeds. Rather, they are always fixed and permanent among [followers of] all religions. People of superior intellect and just perceptions can understand and accept these [truths], even if they may not be believers in any religion.

In contrast, the third category includes deeds and acts. Since they deal with customs and practices of people, they change from time to time. Therefore, many of these customs are different not only among different religious communities, but some of them change and are modified even within a single religious community. Consequently, the priority in time of these injunctions and principles is not in contradiction with their being part of religion. For example, the oneness of the Lord of the universe and affirmation of earlier prophets are the foundations and necessary components of this religion, although its existence precedes those prophets.

The reason that founders of philosophy are other than prophets is that Divine mercy has given sense faculties the power to perceive minor manifest aspects of sensible things. He has placed perceiving them as the proof of their existence. In this way when someone perceives one of the sensible things the way it should be perceived, such as colours and forms with eyes and sound with ears, without any doubt and error, the proof of its existence becomes perfect and complete so that one cannot deny it. If one says that one did not see or hear it, one would not be excused. Similarly, God bestowed the faculty of intellection with the power to understand the nonmanifest aspects of universal realities and made this understanding the proof of [their existence]. So, when one perceives something by this faculty and is convinced by its proof, if one denies it, one will not be excused. This meaning,

that is to say, the intellect's perception of the nonmanifest aspects and realities of things is proof for them. Although this is so obvious, nonetheless, much emphasis is placed upon it in many prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*).

For instance, it has been reported that the Commander of the Faithful ['Alī] (peace be upon him) once said, 'The function of the intellect is to contemplate and perceive the inner meaning of Divine wisdom and creation.' It has been reported that His Holiness, Imam Muḥammad Bāqir (peace be upon him) said that:

On the Day of Judgment God, Exalted is He, will reckon the account of His servants in accordance with the degree of the intellect He bestowed upon them in the world.

It has also been reported that His Holiness Imam Mūsā Kāzīm (peace be upon him) said:

Indeed God, Exalted is He, sent two proofs to His servants: One is the manifest proof, and that is prophets and Imams (may God's greetings be upon them). The second is the nonmanifest proof, and that is the intellects that He has granted them.

Finally, he has also been reported to say:

The entire affairs and injunctions of the faith, whether its principles or minor, universal and particular injunctions fall into two categories: One category is the essential and necessary affairs of religion and cannot ever be doubted. The second is the affairs in which the possibility of doubt and denial exist. Therefore, if one brings about an issue or a question of this sort, it is mandated upon him to present proofs for his claim. For example, if there is a verse [of the Qur'ān] in whose hermeneutics and spiritual interpretation (*ta'wīl*) all commentators agree without any dispute; or an authentic *ḥadīth* in whose meaning there is no disagreement, or an intellectual argument that all intellects accept and consider as valid; therefore, its acceptance is necessary by people of intellects and its denial is condemned. Now, if someone makes claim to such an issue and has no proof for it, there is reason to doubt his claims, and everyone in the community from among the intellectual elite or common people must condemn him.

He then adds:

The proof and reason that must be presented concerning issues pertaining to religion is what we mentioned. Therefore, if any of these three criteria of proofs can be applied, it must be accepted. Otherwise, it must be abandoned.

These are the statements of the Imam (peace be upon him) about this issue. It was proven that the intellect is proof from God, Exalted is He, and His command is correct and true. The function of the intellect is to perceive the universal and particular realities of things. Therefore, whatever falls in this category of affairs, people of intellect the light of whose intellects is pure from the darkness of ignorant

people's habits can understand and intellectualize, and opinion and injunction about those issues will not depend upon revelation.

In contrast to the third part of the faith, which is concerned with particular affairs and pertains to the customary habits which the intellect has no way of verifying, this is of course dependent upon revelation. It is for this reason that gnostics among scholars ('*urafā-yi 'ulamā'*) and leading philosophers first prove the [existence] of the First Origin, Divine unity, justice, wisdom, and knowledge through intellectual reasoning and philosophical argumentation and through Him prove the necessity of the existence of prophets, caliphate, miracles and infallibility; and then obey and observe what He commanded, and abstain from what He forbade. If it were otherwise and proving everything were to be based on revelation and the Prophet's message, it would necessarily follow that proving these issues, which are the most important ones, as well as other questions pertaining to the world, would be impossible. For if one does not believe in God and in His power and prophethood and infallibility, it would be useless to tell him that God commanded so and so, or the Prophet informed people of such and such, because he would not believe and become obedient in this manner, and the proof of these issues would not necessarily depend on revelation.

It was previously mentioned that [the existence] of God, Exalted is His Task, and other related issues cannot be proven except through hearing that is identical with emulation and contingent upon affirmation of prophethood, or through reflection upon the creation of the world which is the goal of philosophy. So, from the foregoing discussion, it becomes obvious that although the science of philosophy precedes religion and is ascribed to a group [of thinkers] other than prophets, it is the noblest component of religion and there is no contradiction between these two realities.

Of course, it was destined that those possessed with philosophical wisdom be [ordinary] persons rather than prophets. In their efforts to present reasons for the necessity of prophethood, philosophers have stated that in proving the said principles the intellect is independent and its ruling is the proof. However, since imperfection, weakness of nature and habit dominate most people, Divine mercy is not confined to human intellect. Rather, He has helped and confirmed the intellect by sending prophets and messengers. Therefore, the origin of the creation of philosophy has been Divine revelation.

As has been quoted from Aristotle in the treatise known as *Kitāb al-Tufāḥah* (Book of the Apple), one of his students asked him: 'Whence came science and knowledge to the philosophers?' Aristotle replied: 'Numerous messengers and callers to God from all corners of the earth have always called people to it. First in the world it was given to Hermes. They took his spirit to heaven and the angels taught him philosophy there. In the history of philosophers it has been said that Hermes was the same person as the prophet Idris, may God's greetings be on him and upon our Prophet.'

Second Question: *'If this science is part of religion, why is it that those issues that are brought up in philosophers' books are not mentioned in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth?'* The answer to this question is, how do you come to think that those issues are not brought up in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth? In fact they are brought up in the Qur'ān, and ḥadīth, but in their inward and hidden meanings. No one can understand them except those who have aptitude for it. The Qur'ān has addressed His Holiness the Prophet about this question: *'We sent you the Book so that you can explain everything.'*¹ In another verse of the Qur'ān, it is mentioned that: *'Nothing exists, whether wet or dry unless its existence is mentioned in the Clear Book.'* This point has also been alluded to in many statements of the *ahl al-bayt*. The following are two examples: *'Nothing exists [in the world] unless its proof and injunction is mentioned in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth';* and *'Never two people contend on an issue unless its proof and injunction is presented in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth.'* Yet, [unfortunately] most people do not perceive this.

One may ask why these questions are not openly dealt with in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Our response is that the religion of Islam was revealed for all people [of the world]. Peoples' intellects and [powers of perception] are different, and the majority of them are weak and imperfect. They are incapable of understanding the realities and hidden aspects of things. Understanding complicated questions and meanings is extremely difficult and perhaps impossible for them. This is an obvious matter. Therefore, if difficult questions were discussed openly and candidly in the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, the majority of people would have been bewildered, or even inflicted with loss and disbelief. The *ahl al-bayt* of purity who were the most perfect of all philosophers and the most outstanding of all scholars, out of necessity and in a wise and expedient manner, explained the questions and meanings of the world briefly, so that whoever heard them would understand something in accordance with his own intellect and remain uninformed about most of it [that they could not understand] so that no corruption would be caused. As the *ahl al-bayt* have said themselves: *'We are the companions of the prophets, and we speak to the people in accordance with the level of their intellects.'*

Third Question: *'In the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, it is not clear what is meant by reflection (tafakkur). Does it mean reflection upon the realities and essences of things, or upon their values and benefits, as some traditions have explicated it?'*

The answer to this question is that although certain traditions allude to the first, many other [Qur'ānic] verses and traditions point to the second. Often both cases are quite common. What is meant in both cases is universal meaning. In a particular text, they denote particular meaning. As was pointed out before, the reason for this is that all creatures have two dimensions. The first is the dimension of need and

1. Qur'ān 5:48. It is not entirely clear to which verse the author is alluding, but 5:48 comes closest to the above-mentioned verse.

imperfection. From this angle, creatures are the proof of the existence of their Creator. The second is the dimension of nobility and worth. From this angle, they are the proof of the nobility and perfection of the Creator. If one looks at the nobility and perfection of things from this point of view, one cannot but affirm their Creator. Star-worshippers and other polytheists originated from this situation. However, when they observed some nobility and benefits in them, they were inflicted by delusion and deception and remained negligent of their shortcomings and defects. They accepted their 'godhood' and worshipped them. If they had been aware of the imperfection of the stars, they would have never believed in their 'godhood', since what is perfect and noble is not in need of a Creator because of its perfection and nobility. However, since the weak and imperfect are weak and imperfect, they are in need of a Creator and Maker.

Similarly, if one looks at the imperfections and shortcomings of things, one cannot prove the nobility and perfection of their Maker, for the Maker of imperfect and base things, is not expected to be perfect and noble precisely because those things are imperfect and base. It is clear that sometimes nobility or lowliness is from the realities and essences of things, and sometimes from their attributes and accidents. Obviously, essence is the principle and superior to attributes. Therefore, it is now proven that what is meant by reflection is general and universal, whether it be upon the essence and attributes, or upon nobility and lowliness.

Fourth Question: *'If this science (philosophy) is part of religion, why do people learn it from books written by others [i.e. non-Muslims]?'*

The answer to this question is that not all people need other people's books. The relationship between those books and the religion of Islam concerning the first and second question is like the relation of books on jurisprudence and [Qur'ānic] commentaries (*tafsīr*) with religion in the third question. For all these books in relation to the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* are like commentaries. Not all minds can grasp all injunctions and questions from the texts of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*. Therefore, out of necessity, scholars and philosophers with the help of their intellect and the power of knowledge have brought out complicated questions from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and have provided solutions and responses [to those questions] based on transmitted proofs and intellectual reasoning. They have written and expressed them in a different language and in simple phrases so that other people, who are not capable of doing those [things] themselves, would not be deprived of its benefits.

When one says, 'Prophets and the guiding Imams spoke to people in accordance with their power of perception, then why do the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* need commentaries?' Our response is that some people understand them without commentaries and some people need them. Some people need little explanation. For some others, much more explanation may not be enough. Some people understand

them to the end just by hearing the beginning sentence, while others understand only after its conclusion. Still some others may need to refer to them periodically even after completion. The same applies to other aspects of differences. [Not all] the Qur’ān and ḥadīth address all people. Rather, some [of their injunctions] are specifically for prophets and the Imams, some for scholars and people of intellect, and finally, some for the common people in general. Yet on every one of these levels, the level of addressing them is different in accordance with the difference in peoples’ powers of perception and understanding. Therefore, the Imams (peace be upon them), talked to each person in accordance with his level of perception. They directed the ignorant people to learn and the scholars to teach and educate them so that Divine emanation and mercy can extend to all, and every container can be filled to the extent of its capacity. This is like saying that the Qur’ān was revealed in the Arabic language because its addressees were Arabs, and it must be translated for non-Arabs into their language. Otherwise, common people and non-Arabs would have been deprived of the bounties of religion until eternity.

Fifth Question: *‘If this path is the straight path and this science has descended from God, then why are there so many disagreements among its possessors?’*

The answer to this question is as follows: If difference [of opinion] in any field is a proof of its nullity or the reason for its deficiency, it would be necessary that the science of jurisprudence and all the other sciences in the world be false and useless, for no science exists without the existence of difference [of opinion] among its possessors. Rather, by necessity this *corruption* (we take refuge in God to say this) exists in the religion of Islam more than in other religions; for there is not as much difference and dispute in any other religion as in this religion whether in its basic principles or minor injunctions. To prove this it suffices to mention that according to the famous ḥadīth of the *ahl al-bayt*, peace be upon them, the followers of Islam have been divided into seventy-three sects (*firqah*). Therefore, it is obvious that difference of opinion among a group are not a reason for its nullity and the reason for deficiency of its path. The mystery of this is that everything has a guide and a manner, and walking on any path has its own conditions, rules, and provisions. If whatever is supposed to be observed is observed, there would not be any dispute over it, unless there were imperfection and shortcoming in observing the commands that are mandatory and necessary to observe. Therefore, in any field the solution for distinguishing between right and wrong is to refer to its conditions and rules. Whatever is in conformity with the rules and conditions is right, and its opposite is wrong. From what we have said we can conclude that if the majority of people who ascribe to philosophy say something wrong and false (*bāṭil*), that does not contradict the reality of philosophy and will not necessitate its abrogation and nullification, for from among seventy-three sects in Islam, one is legitimate and true, and that sect is in minority among all other sects.

Also, among people of knowledge and scholarship in every field, there are very few outstanding scholars who can be trusted compared with others who have ascribed to that field [of science]. The Discerning Qur'ān (*Qur'ān al-furqān*) gives testimony to this [truth] when it says: 'If you follow the path of the majority of people of the earth, they will take you out of God's path and mislead you, because most of them have no proof except guessing and conjecture, and that is of no benefit.' Condemnation of the majority and praise of the selected few, in the Qur'ān and sayings of the *ahl al-bayt* (peace be upon them), is repeated quite frequently.

Praise the Lord, this chapter has reached its conclusion and has achieved its purpose and the fair and objective listeners have heard the truth of philosophy in an undifferentiated manner. By the Will of God, Exalted is He, let us now turn to another chapter and hear the most notable issues of contention and difference in a differentiated manner.

Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī

Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-‘Ābidīn ‘Alawī ‘Āmili Iṣfahānī came from a Shi‘i family that hailed originally from the Jabal ‘Āmil region of present-day Lebanon as his full name reveals. He was also a descendent of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib; hence his title ‘Alawī. Sayyid Aḥmad himself was, however, Isfahani. He was born in Isfahan, studied and taught in that city and died there between 1054–1060/1644–1650. Similar to Mullā Ṣadrā, Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkiwarī, and so many other notable philosophers of the School of Isfahan, Sayyid Aḥmad studied with the founder of that school, Mīr Dāmād, and of all the students of the master was closest to him personally and philosophically. Sayyid Aḥmad was Mīr Dāmād’s maternal cousin and his son-in-law. Moreover, he was so close to Mīr Dāmād that the master called him his spiritual son (*walad rūḥānī*). Sayyid Aḥmad also wrote important commentaries on some of Mīr Dāmād’s works and followed his *ishrāqī* interpretation of Peripatetic philosophy.

Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī wrote in both Arabic and Persian. His works include important commentaries on three philosophical texts: *al-Qabasāt* (Firebrands) and *Taqwīm al-īmān* (Rectification of Faith) of Mīr Dāmād and *Kitāb al-Shifā’* (The Book of Healing) of Ibn Sīnā. Sayyid Aḥmad’s writings also include the gnostic commentary on the Qur’ān, *al-Laṭā’if al-ghaybiyyah* (Subtle Considerations of the Invisible World) and three works, which are responses to attacks of Christian missionaries against Islam, to which we shall turn shortly.

Perhaps the most important philosophical work of Sayyid Aḥmad ‘Alawī is his famous commentary upon the *Shifā’*, a commentary that stands by itself as an independent philosophical text. This commentary, which is one of the most important ever written on Ibn Sīnā’s magnum opus, reveals Sayyid Aḥmad’s intimate knowledge of not only Ibn Sīnā, but also other Muslim Peripatetics such as Bahmanyār and Lūkārī. Moreover, it also reveals his profound knowledge of the teachings of Suhrawardī and the philosophers of the School of Shiraz such as Dawānī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī and his son Mīr Ghiyāth al-Dīn Manṣūr Dashtakī.

Like his master, Mīr Dāmād, Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī was an Avicennan who, however, interpreted the teachings of the supreme master of Muslim Peripatetics in light of the teachings of Suhrawardī and later *ishrāqī* figures. And so in his commentary he deals not only with the usual Peripatetic ideas, but also alludes to Ibn Sīnā's 'Oriental philosophy' (*al-ḥikmah al-mashriqiyyah*), so much neglected in Western studies of the author of the *Shifā'*. Moreover, besides dealing with issues of ontology, Sayyid Aḥmad treats such non-Peripatetic themes as the imaginal world, the body of resurrection, the reality of Platonic ideas (treated in a non-Peripatetic manner), and the distinction between time (*zamān*) and aeviternity (*dahr*) which is a cornerstone of Mīr Dāmād's philosophical position.

Like Suhrawardī, Sayyid Aḥmad also alludes to certain philosophical ideas associated with Zoroastrianism. This point is of special interest when considered in the context of Safavid philosophy and Corbin goes so far as to call it 'Neo-Zurvanism'. Moreover, at the end of his commentary upon the *Shifā'*, Sayyid Aḥmad reveals his specifically Shi'i proclivity by identifying the perfect sage of Ibn Sīnā with the Shi'i Imams and discusses both their noetic and eschatological functions.

The three works of Sayyid Aḥmad written in response to Christian polemics against Islam are of special interest from the point of view of comparative theology and comparative religion and hold a unique position among the writings of Islamic philosophers. During the Safavid period, as *falsafah* and *ḥikmat* absorbed *kalām* to a large extent, they also came to fulfil many of the functions one identifies with theology. The three works of Sayyid Aḥmad devoted to what most would consider as theological polemics must be seen in light of this background so that one may come to understand why during his time it was a philosopher and not a theologian in the sense of *mutakallim* who undertook this task that was necessitated by the attacks of Christian missionaries against Islam.

The three works of Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī concerned with this matter are *Lawāmi'-i rabbānī* (Lordly Flashes), *Miṣqal-i ṣafā* (Polishing Instrument of Purity) and *Lama'āt-i malakūtiyyah* (Celestial Splendours). The first is in response to Pietro della Valle's attack against Islam which the Italian scholar wrote in 1621. The second contains the rebuttal to a book written by a Catholic missionary in India entitled *Ā'ina-yi ḥaqq-namā* (Mirror Reflecting the Truth). This book became famous in India and reached Persia where it caused much opposition and anger. The third book is shorter than the first two and deals in a philosophico-theological manner with such issues as the Word and the three hypostases of the Christian Trinity. It is in a sense an *ishrāqī* commentary upon the Gospels and remains significant even today for the present theological discourse going on between Muslims and Christians.

Altogether Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī is an intriguing figure of the School of Isfahan who should be studied for his own thought, for the clarification of the thought of

his teacher, Mīr Dāmād, and for better knowledge of the presence of the Avicennan tradition in the later history of Islamic philosophy. As for his studies and responses to Christian theology, his contributions are unique among the philosophers of the School of Isfahan and rare in the history of Islamic philosophy.

We have selected part of 'Alawī's commentary on *The Book of Healing*, in which the subject of eschatology is discussed. 'Alawī elucidates on such concepts as the soul and its survivability after death, in the process alluding to the views of other philosophers such as Suhrawardī and Bahmanyār, among others.

S. H. Nasr

COMMENTARY ON THE 'BOOK OF HEALING'

Sharḥ al-shifā'

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Sayyid Aḥmad 'Alawī, *Sharḥ al-shifā'* (Tehran, 1384 Sh./2006), pp. 12–29; 87–117.

He [Ibn Sīnā] says: 'Some aspects of resurrection are admitted by religious law'.

I say, concurrently with what he mentioned in his treatise on resurrection in the context of expounding the different creeds and opinions in these words:

As for all those who assert the resurrection of the soul and body, they appear to imagine that life consists in the existence of the soul and death in the soul departing the body. They restore the soul in the Second Coming to the identical body in which it subsisted, some describing the soul as spiritual, rather than corporal, others as a body which is subtler than other bodies. Some say that once the soul is restored to the body, those rewarded or punished receive their reward or punishment according to the character of the body and the soul together. In that case, those rewarded will partake of bodily pleasures of the sensible type, as well as spiritual pleasures, such as contemplating the divine realm by the eye of inner insight, and are guarded against pain and annihilation. (Those are the generality of Muslims.) As for those who are punished, they are subjected to bodily pains, such as cold and flagellation, or spiritual, such as curses, humiliation, sorrow, hardship and gloom. (End of Ibn Sīnā's words.)

It appears that he held a similar view of bodily resurrection also, just as the law of our Prophet (God bless him and his kinsmen) stipulates.

Similarly, the Second Teacher [al-Fārābī] has stated in a treatise entitled *Opinions of Zeno the Great*, 'I have seen certain epistles of Zeno the Great, disciple of Aristotle and the Greek sage,¹ which the Christians have commented on and amplified. I have commented on them, as the commentator ought to comment on each chapter, often explaining some of the intentions they contain, such as demonstrating the existence of the First Principle, [clarifying the] discourse on prophecy and the religious law.' As he then states, 'As for resurrection, it has been asserted by the religious law and we will expound it in conformity with what that law has commanded. It consists in both intellectual pleasures and sensuous pleasure as Plato says: "Everyone will be accorded in his future what he expected in his present."'

1. Plotinus (d. 270). Both Zeon the Eleatic (d. 261 BC) and Zeno of Kition (d. AD 265) preceded Plotinus and were not associated with Aristotle.

He¹ has also stated in his book entitled *The Agreement of the Opinions (of Both Sages, Aristotle and Plato)*, 'As for Plato, he has given at the end of his *Politics*² an account of the irascible (part) of the soul proclaiming resurrection, reincarnation, judgment, justice, the balance and the rewarding or punishment proportionate to one's actions, right or wrong. Actually, he mentions this matter in the sequel to his statement that Aristotle had declared that reward is necessary in the world of nature.' Then he added as a sequel to what we have reported concerning his position: 'Indeed, whoever ponders what we reported of the teachings of those two sages³ will be spared false conjectures and unfounded illusions, as well as earning the burden of what is attributed to those two venerable (sages) of which they are innocent and far removed.' He then goes on much further and asserts, 'What we have concurred on is that corporal resurrection is a matter on which the philosophers are agreed.'

An allusion is made to corporal resurrection in the treatise of the Brethren of Purity in these words: 'This is what the prophets (peace be with them) have taught, followed by the words, 'This is confirmed by the evidence of investigation, is confirmed by the judgment of demonstration, is contained in the heavenly scriptures and expressed in higher confirmations, including the news of original creation and resurrection and the varieties of creations, whether spiritual or corporal substances.' The manner of their annihilation and their parallels lie outside human consideration or observation by means of the senses. Instead, knowledge thereof deepens on assenting to the discourses of the prophets (peace on them), whose veracity cannot be questioned. And these are clear demonstrations, flashing signs and miracles exceeding the power of human kind. This lies outside the range of human capacity or ability, meaning that of the materialists and advocates of naturalism who incline to denial and repudiation, rebelling against the prophets and messengers and rebutting them. However, it is clear to whoever examines their words that rational arguments can be inferred from them, as the Shaykh⁴ has said: 'Practical reason requires in all of its actions the body, as well as corporal faculties; but while theoretical reason may sometimes require the body and its faculties, it does not always and in every respect. Rather, it can dispense with it by itself.' This confirms what we have been saying.

We may summarize what we said in various ways, one of which being this. Those two faculties⁵ depend on the substance of the rational soul as such. Now were they to depart from it once it has been stripped of what relates to it of the body, then what is essential would have to be separated from the essence. It follows that they

1. al-Fārābī.

2. That is, *The Republic*.

3. That is, Plato and Aristotle.

4. Ibn Sīnā.

5. The practical and the theoretical.

always exist together and that were He¹ not to return it to Himself another time, that faculty, namely the practical, would always be deterred from seeking its object, despite the fact that He has great power and perfect authority over it. It would then follow that He is not generous at all—may the Almighty be declared to be above that altogether!

In another respect, the human rational faculties take at every stage of generation or phase a manifestation conforming to its specific and determinate generation. This is confirmed in a natural manner by the fact that this original generation which was blessed by His might does not cease to be associated with the principle of concrete particularity dependent on matter. Otherwise, its reality would be reversed, and thus the reality of pure immaterial entities would cling to it fully, and then it would belong to the category of divine reasons, rather than human souls, by reason of the fact that its acquisition of that particularity and that property is necessary, and were it to be stripped of it, its very reality would be altered. This is similar in a sense to the status of pure matter, which cannot be separated from form or its susceptibility for it; thus that particularity cannot be separated from it, but must cling to it forever.

Similarly, were the True Maker not able to return it to Himself a second time, then the perquisite of its nature would be denied it. For since it was originally partaking of bodily pleasures and perfections, were it denied that capability after departing the body, it would then turn into a pure intellect, which is absurd. It follows that it must retain that capability. For if He did not cause it to come to be a second time, together with the possibility of combining both rational and sensuous pleasures and being fulfilled thereby, then He would have denied it access to sensuous pleasures and perfections, despite the fact that it is susceptible of them and is not incapable thereof. For that it follows that (God's) mansions of glory would be surrounded by avarice, imperfection and inadequacy and futility would surround His pure generosity and complete goodness, and then the True and Generous One would be devoid of generosity; may He be proclaimed well above this!

Should you object that were this the case, then it would have been necessary that the rational soul should not abandon the body at all, and then it would not be susceptible of natural death at all!

I say the Shaykh has hinted at the answer in the physical parts of this book,² where he says, 'It is necessary to conceive of the universal and particular properly, then understand that much of what lies outside the course of particular nature is intended by universal nature. Thus death, although not intended in relation to particular nature, pertaining to Zayd, it is nonetheless intended in relation to universal nature in a variety of ways. One is to liberate the soul from association with the body, for the sake of gaining the happiness of the blessed, which is the

1. God.

2. *al-Shifā'*.

ultimate intent for which the body has been created. The fact that it (the soul) has been created means that it was not by nature but rather by bad choice, so that some other people would be as deserving of existing as this man in his particular existence. For, were those others immortalized, there would be no place or capacity left for the others; whereas in the capacity of matter, there is a measure of capacity for those others, who are deserving of this mode of existence. For those here below, are not worthy of eternal non-being rather than immortality since these and similar intentions of universal nature, make every matter and every form to be susceptible of what it is destined to receive. It will not cease and if it prefers the form of the finger it will not be denied it or lose it.

It follows from this that were it not exposed to corruption, matter would have been free of potentiality and disposition, either because it is occupied with certain entities constantly, or because of the inability of the earth to contain them all, despite the fact that it is fitted to receive being from the mansions of His glory and His generosity. For if existing entities did not perish, that would entail forgoing much good for the sake of a small evil, and this is a grave evil.

Moreover, if an existing entity were to wish not to be corrupted, that would be equivalent to wishing not to exist and then it would have wished not to be corrupted at all. How could a rational being choose that ever?

In addition, the advocates of transmigration, having lost sight of all these clear signs, maintain that it is impossible for the soul to be completely corrupted, with all its active powers. Therefore, they held that it is possible for it to be transmitted from one body to another, either nobler or baser, forgetting that it is impossible for an infinite number of bodies to exist throughout the multiple periods, let alone in a single period. And this, as the eminent Abu'l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmiri indicated, appears to be the laying-down of certain premises.

One is that corporal resurrection, or the soul's return to its bodily frame, which it had before, is very possible, because its parts will remain in the next resuscitation.

Moreover, it is better and more fitting with respect to wisdom, and more perfect and complete with respect to reward, that this holy resuscitation (of the soul) in that eternal resurrection should lead to restoring it to its original material frame, which is to it what nests are to birds; otherwise, it would lose its natural perfections, despite the fact that it has continued to retain its additional power and its human strength. This is what appears from his words, 'Existing entities to which God granted the dignity of life are of three types: (1) terrestrial beasts which perform their action only in accordance with natural cognition; (2) the human species which performs its actions in accordance with both nature and reason and (3) (spiritual entities).' There is no doubt that the perfection of the first type consists in partaking of physical pleasures only, that of the second type in partaking of rational pleasures, and that of the third type in both. That is why divine scriptures describe

spiritual entities generally and frequently as possessing rational perfections, such as commending them for being honoured servants and favoured angels, that they never disobey God's orders but perform what they are commanded to perform and that they sing the praise of God unremittently day and night. Mankind, by contrast, has been promised the partaking of physical pleasures, more frequently such as deflowering maidens, reclining on soft sofas, resting on mattresses and consuming fruits.

It follows that the human soul will not attain its absolute perfection except by partaking of both rational and physical pleasures. Therefore, it is more appropriate in wisdom, more complete in conduct, more fitting in reward and more adequate in power that the souls should be returned upon resurrection to their own bodies after becoming luminous, pure, subtle and heavenly. For, if they are not returned to (those bodies) they would lack one of the two varieties of pleasures and perfections pertaining to them, and the other type would be denied them, and that would amount to demeaning their perfection. Moreover, it appears to follow from the words of the leading philosophers that reason stipulates that divine actions, once their reference to (Divine) power is elicited and their best aspect is shown, should be the basis for judgment, and one should not turn to something else, even if it were within the range of capability.

Similarly, it is not inaccessible to the student of this art that restoring the soul to the original matter upon its eternal regeneration is conducive to both its physical and rational happiness and the acquisition of both the psychic and angelic condition, although some of the blessed will not attain rational pleasure or angelic delight, due to the fact that their soul had not acquired scientific perfection and spiritual properties of the cognitive type during its mortal phase. Thus, were it not for this resuscitation, none of that happiness will occur and the blessed in the second resuscitation would be very few.

It follows that this proof and the one preceding are taken from the writings of eminent philosophers, especially what was given by the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) in this context and his other philosophical treatises, every one of which is effective in proving this thesis as clearly as the moon on a bright night. Therefore, it is patent, by this illumination and clarification, that there exist certain rational demonstrations, supported by authoritative evidence.

If you grant this, it will be clear to you, as some scholars have said, that those philosophers who deny resurrection upon the eternal regeneration are of three types. In the first place those who peruse the writings, especially what is reported of the sayings of the Master of the Illuminationists, the Divine Plato, and the leaders of the Peripatetics, Aristotle, al-Fārābī and the author of the canons of their views, al-Shaykh Abū 'Alī ibn Sīnā, who will either grasp their intent or not. All this is superficial and it not worthy of eminent folk, let alone scholars and masters especially of one who has achieved fame in the world such as Imam (Fakhr al-Dīn)

Rāzī, who has stated 'that the views of learned scholars regarding resurrection are five. For resurrection is (1) either corporal only, (2) spiritual only or (3) both, (4) is not likely to be apparent at all or (5) cannot be ascertained fully. The first is the view of most theologians,¹ the second that of the philosophers, the third that of some of them, the fourth that of the ancient naturalists and the fifth that ascribed to Galen.' (End.)

It is clear to the thoughtful that the metaphysical philosophers, whether the Peripatetics or Illuminationists, have all chosen the third alternative, so that none of them disagreed. However, their master Rāzī and other followers, and the followers of those followers, have added to the drum of daring another note, as their souls inclined them to do, and thus thought ill of those masters. Perhaps, 'The mountains are almost rent asunder', on account of this grave charge, and, 'the earth is split and the mountains fall to pieces' (19:90) due to this big falsity.

Should you say that Imam Rāzī took this line because the philosophers, having asserted that the world is eternal, which apparently cannot be reconciled to corporal resurrection, as the venerable al-Dawānī² has mentioned, quoting the words of the latter, to the effect that believing the message of the Prophet and denying corporal resurrection are irreconcilable, just as are assenting at the same time to the eternity of the world, as the philosophers do, and to corporal resurrection. 'For rational souls, on this account, are infinite and so require to be resuscitated both as infinite bodies and infinite places, the finitude of places having been demonstrated, as they contend.' (Here his words end.)

I say, this is not too obscure. First, the eternity of the world entails the non-eternity of human souls, since their annihilation is possible on the assumption that the world is eternal, not that its eternity implies their infinity. Secondly, assuming that they are created in time, their infinity is not necessary, for the species can be either generated or re-generated (in time).

As for the argument that daily occurrences depend on the positions of the stars, which entails their infinity, it is accepted by both the people of sight and of insight on the assumption that those positions are necessarily repeatable. For why cannot the advocates of the eternity of the world concede that, provided the proportions of those positions are assumed to be spatial and not numerical? Moreover, the differentiation of those species which are generated and those which are regenerated on the assumption of the eternity of the first, but not the second, appears from the words of the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) in the physical part of this book, where he states, 'It appears that there are in the world occurrences which cannot be determined historically, nor can it be denied that animals, plants and their species might perish and then be generated without regeneration.' (End.) This is clearly stated.

1. *al-Mutakallimūn*.

2. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 1051).

The *ishrāqī* Sage¹ has mentioned that, following the generation of various species, whether trees, birds, buffalos or the like, together with sweet scents, delicious tastes, delightful colours and fragrant gardens, according to the different phases of each of the planets as suits each one of them; then, once the sixth millennium started, it was accompanied by Mercury, and man was generated from earth without proportion.

In brief, every planet has a reign of seven thousand years on its own, and the rest by participation (with other planets). Once you learn the reality of resurrection and its occurrence, you should know that the Succour of the Philosophers² has said that the last word of scholars is that the highest intention and the utmost good, on which the greatest happiness in this world and the next depends, is the knowledge of this world and the next, the origin and the return, around which fancies have diverged and opinions have differed, with respect to their essence and existence. I will present them in a manner for which you will not find any parallel in the words of others. I say, indeed, they are at times considered in relation to the whole, and at other times in relation to part of the whole, defined as a species or an individual in each case, considered in one of two ways, the first, as first and last absolutely, wherein nothing exists except God Almighty, 'who is the first and the last, the outer and the Inner' (57:3); the second as the first stage in its primary appearance, its confirmation, its end and the final stage of its formation and determination.

It is clear that origin and resurrection could be regarded in relation to the royal entity, which is the human soul, considered in two respects. One is the density of its essence and properties, whereby it conforms with the higher world fully in relation to its original nature, which is a beginning; (the second) is the fact that it has been burdened with the prison of the body and thus was cut off from its Maker, the True One, and parted from Him. But when it returned to Him by shedding its human frame and dropping its material clothing, it achieved its resurrection. God Almighty has said, 'O quiescent soul, return unto your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing' (89:27–28). This is what Plato the Divine has referred to in his maxim, 'Die by will and you will live by nature', as did the Greek Sage³ who says, 'The soul sinned and thus was punished by being incarnated in the body, or sought refuge in the body and was thus distanced from its destiny and parted from its good. When it strives inwardly and engages in recurrent exercises, the body becomes in its estimation no different from a garment it wears once and then sheds.' From this it is clear that there is here a mode of origin and resurrection together in repetition; nor would it be too far-fetched to assume that by the home-country in the saying, 'The love of the home-country is a form of faith', is meant this resurrection as so interpreted.

1. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1191).

2. Suhrawardī.

3. Plotinus.

Once this is posited, we would return to the beginning and say that what has been attributed to the Shaykh (Ibn Sinā) in accordance with what is found in some treatises attributed to him is different from what is given in this book which we are commenting on, and is generally believed to be his work. Here one is led to conclude that this is not part of his teaching, and that that treatise refers to his refutation of the view of corporal resurrection, as follows: 'For they believe that (the soul) returns to that matter itself and then that matter would have to be the one which was joined (to the body) throughout the years of its initial life. Now, if matter is the same at death, it would follow that the one who is injured, amputated or has his arm cut off in the path of God will be of the same form, and this is unacceptable, according to them. If, on the other hand, all his parts during his lifetime are resuscitated with him, it would follow that one part is resuscitated as the body, the head, the liver and the heart, because it is established that the organic parts are transmitted one to the other by nutrition, each feeding from the excess of the food of the other. It is then necessary to assume that a person, who feeds in those countries where people feed on other people and subsequently grows into a man out of his nourishment, will not be resuscitated, because his substance consists of the parts of the substance of the other people. Those parts will be resuscitated in others if he were to be resuscitated himself, and then the parts of the others will be lost and cannot be resuscitated.

If it is now objected that some of the risen parts which make up his life will not avail him, because they have been so arranged and rendered equal in merit, that some are constitutive of life and some are not, then rising from that dust or the dust of another would be the same indifferently. The rule of justice would thereby be repudiated with respect to the resuscitation of the organs of the body, unless they accord the parts proper to resurrection a specific property which it sheds, since these parts were, during the first phase of life, part of the matter essential to life. In that case, asserting resurrection would be arbitrary and useless in every respect. For assigning resurrection to equivalent parts would amount to conceiving of the state of annihilation as the cause of one thing deserving a given property, apart from another, during the state of emerging annihilation, while the possible non-existent is the same as the matter susceptible of it. He then adds, 'If you consider this and reflect on it you will understand that [vegetation] often appears on the surface of the inhabited land-masses of corpses of the dead, where it has been ploughed and filled with plants; it is from corpses of the dead that nutrients arise.

It is then possible to bring back to life matter which bore the form of the two men in two periods of time, one of which precedes the other indivisibly.' He continues next: 'If one were to say that resurrection is possible by resuscitating a body made up of any earth, air, fire and water, not necessarily analogous to the elements existing in the first life, we would say that this is equivalent to the explicit profession of transmigration, depicted as something else by recourse to a verbal ruse. However, in

truth, there is no difference in reality between the two similar matters or elements, in one of which subsisted a human form which is now lost, while the other did not inhere in it, and now is no longer there, upon the second generation. If restoring the soul to the matter in one case is transmigration, then the same is true with respect to the other matter, since the second human body is not the same as the first, and restoring life to a body other than the first is the same as transmigration. Thus, if they prefer to apply the term transmigration to the body which does not share the same matter numerically with the first, they are at liberty to do so, but in the same indifferent sense.' (End.)

You can see that what follows from his words that 'if all the parts which were his throughout all his life be identical with the hand, the head and the liver,' etc., are resuscitated, a single part must not be supported by the claim that some of them feed on the nutrition of other parts. It is merely a weak proof that the residue of the nutrients of every organ is a matter for that organ, although the residue cannot be restored, according to us. What is important in that regard, are the original parts; but his words, 'It is necessary that the man who feeds is one of the people feeding in the reported land', is a mere tale without evidence, testimony or trace with respect to what is reported.

A questioner might deny that their nutrients are limited to these. His statement that 'its substance consists of parts of the substance of the other' is not the case according to us. If we grant that something might prevent the original parts of one from pertaining to another person, then why cannot the additional parts be the same? Thus what he implied in saying, 'The risen from his parts are those parts which ensured his life', will be refuted. For, if you ponder the matter well, you will perceive that the most visible part of the surface of the globe consists of corpses of the dead, and since the tree reveals the fruit, you will understand what he inferred from the above by saying, 'It is possible to resuscitate matter which was the bearer of the form of two persons'. Add to this similar propositions.

He then stated in continuance of what we quoted of his words, 'The weakest advocates of this position are the Christians for the following reasons, that the religious law, transmitted by our Prophet Muḥammad, may he and his folk be blessed by God, is the best and most perfect of all other laws. That is why he is the "seal" of the prophets and the laws, as well as the last creed. Engaging in the definition of this law and its merits and the inferiority of previous laws to it is not worthy of being pursued; all that we need to discuss is defining the measure of the superiority of its view of resurrection. For, as we have shown, the greatest intention of the law is the reward of human actions, so that man may do good himself or in relation with his partner in his species and his mate in his genus.

As for the extent to which juridical discourse is intended to engage with the subject of resurrection, it consists in a brief reference to the existence of the Maker, His attributes, His unity, His wisdom and His justice, as well as His freedom from

imperfections (falsely) attributed to Him, as well as the existence of the angels and the exposition of divine causality in general terms and its description in terms acceptable to the masses, and then the depiction of the angels in the best way imaginable for the public, without delving into those purely rational notions or the noble spiritual signs which cannot be grasped except by the intellects of the philosophers. This should be followed by exhorting or dissuading the public by enticing them with recourse to reward or deterring them by recourse to punishment and depicting the rewarded bliss, not by reference to noble and actual divine and superlative images, but rather the easily intelligible ones they cherish, which consist in temperamental pleasure, as well as depicting the opposite misery. Pleasure is then divided into the pleasure of hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, feeding and sexuality, which is a form of touching. This is to be followed by an extensive discourse on the causes of all these, including wide-eyed angels, immortal children, fruits that they desire, a cup from which they are not turned away and nor do they spill, gardens beneath which rivers of milk, honey, wine and pure water flow, beds and curtains and domes spread with silk and fur as vast as the heavens and the earth, and the like. Comfort is then divided into freedom from sorrows and fears, attended by enduring joy and activity, but the greatest of all this is to be visited by the Lord of the Worlds.' (End.)

It is not unknown to people of intelligence that what supports our account of the fact that the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) does not deny corporal resurrection is what he says in this book to this effect: 'It should be known that resurrection is of two types: (1) that which is acceptable to the religious law and cannot be proved except by reference to this law and assent to the prophetic report, and is that which belongs to the body upon resurrection, the good and evil of the body being well known and needing no explanation. The true religious law, which our Master and Lord Muḥammad, may he and his folk be blessed by God, has brought us, has expounded for us the condition of bliss or misery pertaining to the body. (2) There is also (the resurrection) which can be apprehended by reason and demonstrative discourse and is confirmed by prophethood, consisting in that supreme bliss or misery confirmed by the criteria belonging to the soul, despite the fact that our minds cannot visualize them now. The metaphysical philosophers' intent in desiring this bliss is greater than desiring the attainment of corporal bliss; they rather shun it, even if they are granted it. In fact, they do not regard it as great, compared to that bliss which consists in the knowledge of the True First.'

These are his very words which confirm his statements, but not only with respect to his intent, but rather insofar as that the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) believed in this (corporal) resurrection also. What is reported about Imam Rāzī¹ to the effect that the philosophers do not profess it is not true, as will be discerned by anyone who

1. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1209).

has a heart, listens and is a witness. It is possible that this eminent scholar having observed that (the philosophers) do not dwell on this (corporeal) resurrection, and what attaches to it of punishment and reward concluded that they deny it. That is only a matter of conjecture.

However, it is strange that the Shaykh (Ibn Sinā) has determined that the only way to demonstrate corporal resurrection is by recourse to the religious law, whereas you have already learnt that the evidence of rational proof and religious law confirms it, especially since the premises (the philosophers) invoke are taken from their statements.

He then says, continuing what we have quoted from that epistle attributed to him, 'Different opinions regarding resurrection amount to two: (1) that professed by the minority, who are fewer in number and weaker in intellect and deny it, and (2) that asserted by the majority, who are of keener perception and fuller knowledge. The latter fall into (three) categories: (1) Those who confine resurrection to the bodies only, (2) those who confine it to the souls and (3) those who predicate it of souls and bodies together. Those who assert corporal resurrection consist of a band of disputatious Arabs, who hold that the body alone is equivalent to the animal and is man, possessed of a life and humanity created in him and are in fact two accidents, death being their privation and negation. In the second generation a new life and humanity are created in that man, after being lost, and then that man is brought back to life.'

He then says, 'They have diverged and split into factions: (1) those who hold that mankind is divided into pious and impious, the pious are rewarded with immortality, and the impious are punished eternally; and (2) those who hold that mankind is divided into factions, the pious believers, who are rewarded eternally, and the impious believers. Some hold that it is up to the divine will to choose to punish or forgive them, without eternally punishing them. (3) Then there are those who hold that they are punished necessarily and cannot be immortalized, while the infidel is punished eternally. (4) Some hold that the one who is punished is not punished eternally, regardless of whether he is a believer or an infidel, but those rewarded are rewarded eternally, and finally (5) some hold that neither the punished or rewarded are immortal.'

As for those who believe in the resurrection of both the soul and the body, they all refer life to the inherence of the soul in the body, and restoring the soul during the second generation to the same body in which it inhered. Thus some regard the soul as a body subtler than other bodies. Others hold that once the soul is restored to the body, both rewarded and punished humans are granted punishment and reward corresponding to both body and soul. Thus the rewarded will partake of the bodily pleasures of the senses and those spiritual pleasures consisting of playfulness, contemplating the divine realm with the eye of insight and security from torture or annihilation. Those comprise the Muslims at large. However, those punished will

be subject to bodily pains, such as heat and cold, and spiritual pains consisting of curses, shame, fear and hardship.

There are those who hold that pleasures (in that second generation) are purely spiritual, just as the pains, and these are most of the Christians. Then there are differences with respect to immortality and non-immortality, which are similar to the former. But those who confine resurrection to the soul include many factions, one which believes in the corporeality of the soul, while another believes that it is a luminous substance deriving from the world of light and is mixed with the whole body, which the obscure substance is deriving from the world of darkness. Those are the Magians, the dualists, the Manicheans and their ilk, for whom the happiness (of the body) consists in the liberation of the light from darkness, crossing the spheres and emerging into the world of light; while its misery consists in being confined to the dark world.

Another faction believes the (soul's) fate to consist in being re-incarnated in the body continually, and are known as the advocates of transmigration. Finally, a faction regards that fate as confinement to the world of the elements or being rid of it, while others regard it as consisting in the actualization of its substance and freedom from engrossment of the effects of nature in it or its opposite. These factions are the distinguished philosophers.

As for the advocates of transmigration, they are divided into many factions too. One allows for the successive inherence of the soul in all types of bodies capable of growth, whether vegetative or animal. Another allows this in the animal bodies only, while another group denies the inherence of the human soul in any species other than the human. Those are then divided into two groups, those who allow transmigration for the miserable soul only, so that its misery might be fulfilled and it become ready for liberation from matter; while another group allows this fate to both types of souls, the miserable and the blessed, the miserable being reincarnated in tired bodies, the blessed in bodies favoured with grace and respite. Those who adhere to transmigration, among those who believe in the Holy Book, interpret God's words, 'There is no animal crawling on land or a bird flying with its wings but are communities like yourselves' (6:38), as denoting that they hold their souls in common.

They also interpret God's words, '(They shall not enter paradise) until the camel passes through the eye of a needle' (7:40), as denoting that the impious soul will continue to be restored from one body to one subtler than it, until it is purified and is reduced to a condition whereby it inheres in the body of a small worm, whose size is such that it can pass through the eye of a needle, after it has inhered in the body of a camel. As for what is reported of the philosophers who said, 'As to what brings the camel into their puzzles and symbols, it refers to the fact that every soul which is not pious will pass from one body to another which is similar with respect to the prevalent vice in it, until it is relieved of matter. Thus, whoever is afflicted by the

vice of lust will pass, for instance, into the body of a pig, and whoever is afflicted with the vice of anger will pass, for instance, into the body of a lion. Even if man's vice is one of bad dealing with others and he happens to be a tailor, his body will dwell in that of a fish; if a hunter, then he will be reincarnated in the body of the species he hunts. They sometimes say that the impious soul will be tortured in the southern and northern regions by the excess of heat and cold.'

These then are examples of the views of the world on resurrection; and it is God who will ensure justice and guide to the right path.

He says also: 'The same is true of relative (terms); their reality is known from a certain indication (another version says "its duality").'

I say, he means that relative terms in which actual duality is considered in relation to its concept do not require anything other than their correlative. As for its being other, that is another matter, which is to be demonstrated. For instance, the fatherhood of Zayd entails filiality, regardless of whether it is his or someone else's, while demonstration entails that there should exist a filiality subsisting in another. (In some manuscripts it is duality, from the two, which is obvious.)

It follows from this that for an entity to be rational does require that its intelligible object is something else, but not that there should exist a certain intelligible, regardless of whether it is this one or something else, although rationality and intelligibility are correlative terms. That otherness is stipulated by the terminology and the order of concepts, with respect to prior and posterior. He then clarifies this point by saying, 'Not for the sake of the same relation or predication presumed in the mind.'

His words, 'Nor two in some respect', confirm what we said concerning determinable plurality with respect to the knowledge of the thing by itself. For, in brief, the essence, which is free of materiality, is present in itself, so that in relation to itself (the known) would be both knowledge and known, on account of the fact that it possesses both an immaterial identity and an object of knowledge, since it is an immaterial essence present to itself. Thus otherness in these matters is reducible to terminology and not to reference to the self or the limiting circumstances, as some venerable scholars have surmised. The reason is that the reality of the knowledge consists in the acquisition of an immaterial essence by an immaterial (person), regardless of whether it is he or someone else, as appears from what is reported of the Shaykh and other leading philosophers. In fact, it appears from the words of the Shaykh here that there is no otherness here at all essentially or relatively, but pertaining only to terminology and nominal priority and posteriority.

In this way some aspects of doubt are removed. They include the fact that the knowledge of the immaterial in itself is not possible, because knowledge of the duality of the thing and its identity is inconceivable. Similarly, there is no knowledge of the knowledge of the immaterial in every respect, or else infinite regression or potentiality and other forms of doubt will follow.

In short, knowledge has three senses: (1) First, knowledge in the infinitive, relative sense, from which are derived the words, 'He knew, he knows and is the knower'; (2) Secondly, knowledge is that which is present to the knowing self, and (3) thirdly, the origin of discovery and presence as sufficient with respect to origin, regardless of whether actual presence is taken into account or not. For it is clear that the actuality of both primary meanings cannot be conceived without the existence of the object known and its actualization in some sense. It is also clear that they become multiple when the object known is multiple, that the first meaning is abstractive and has no actuality externally, that the second meaning does not have to be an attribute of the knower and that the third meaning is the real sense, which is most deserving of the name.

If this is granted, we say that the second meaning includes the knowledge of both presence and actuality, but the first is united to both the knower and the known and the second to the known but not the knower, as the second meaning is an attribute inhering in the knower, contrary to the first. Therefore, it is not necessary that knowledge in the second sense be an attribute of the knower.

As for what the Succour of the Philosophers (Suhrawardī) says, to the effect that we know necessarily that the reality of knowledge is other than acquiring it, and that the acquisition of the essence of the knower is other than being a knower: were it the same, then every brute would be a knower, insofar as every brute has its own essence, and the known in every case is equivalent to its essence. We also know necessarily that being a knower, to whom known data are revealed, is an external condition, quite different from the reality of the things themselves. It follows that the very reality of the knower alone is not the evidence of the truth of the knower with respect to the knowledge of the thing in itself. For everything in itself is identical with itself and were it to change in itself, it would need another entity to confirm it, other than itself. Therefore, it is necessary for a thing to know itself, for instance, that another thing should confirm its being a knower, and the knowledge of a thing is not the same as the mere existence of that thing.

You see that, if he meant by knowledge in the first sense something other than the pure existence or presence of the thing, then he is right, otherwise it follows that the second sense is analogical, and to be discussed. But if he means by it (knowledge) in the second sense, then it is excluded and the evidence is clear with respect to what he mentioned in reference to the brute. For it is clear that it does not necessarily have an abstract essence, so that its presence to itself could be knowledge or object of knowledge, and that is what is intended therein.

In general, brutes contain matters and material accidents which impede actual rationality. However, were they to be divested of these, then they could become objects, but not subjects of thought, because they do not subsist in themselves. In fact, were they (so divested), then they would be thinking, objects of thought and thought itself. This is analogous to what he says, to the effect that a thing's status

as knower, to which objects of knowledge are revealed, is an external condition; because that is also excluded with respect to the thing's knowledge of itself, as you have already learned, to the effect that the same reality of a thing actually existing confirms that it knows itself, and does not need in that respect anything other than itself, even hypothetically. Moreover, the truth of different concepts referring to a single entity does not entail the duality of true evidence, unless that truth entails an external change, which is not the case. For, were this the case, then the Necessary Being's knowledge of Himself would be excluded except in the event something else is realized, conceptually, and that is necessarily absurd.

It is thus manifest that there is no differentiation, either in reality or in thought, in the thing's knowledge of itself by way of presence. If this is granted, we would assent that the Necessary Being has a threefold knowledge in the above-mentioned senses. One is the attribute of the reality of perfection, which is His very identity. For His identity in itself is the source of the manifestation of all existents, their revelation and their presence, regardless of whether they are outward aspects of what is known, universal or particular, or whether they are cognitive forms or real entities, either sensible or reasonable. For, insofar as all these are emanations from Him, manifested in their essences to Him, due to His knowledge of Himself by Himself, it follows that His knowledge of Himself by Himself, being His very essence, and the source of the emanation and actual presence of everything, is equivalent to the pure knowledge of all existing entities. That is not susceptible of any multiplicity, generality or particularity, since multiplicity and generality are predicable of the objects of (His knowledge) only. You are no doubt aware that that knowledge is an essential perfection of the entity, which is prior to all forms of existence, and hence is actual, primordial and eternal knowledge.

As for that presence which corresponds to bringing into being, it is equivalent to real and relational knowledge, which is not an essential perfection of the self. The same is true of knowledge in the sense of presence which is equivalent to bringing into being. For that too is actual knowledge which perfects the entity. On both counts, it is clear that God's knowledge of things is not passive knowledge derived from them, for then it would not be necessary in every respect. Probably the Shaykh has alluded to this in these words: 'It is inadmissible that the Necessary Being should derive His knowledge of things from those things'. He has also referred to the falsity of the two aspects of (this view), one is Porphyry's claim that the knower and the known are identified and then (God's) subsistence would depend on cognitive forms derived from multiple entities, insofar as they are identified with Him in the manner of the identification of the knower with the known. The Shaykh has drawn attention to the falsity of this view in his words, 'It is inadmissible', up to his saying, 'Otherwise His essence would depend on what He knows and so His subsistence would depend on things', which is absurd. As for deriving His reality from the forms subsisting in Him, as a band of confused writers have claimed, this

should be rejected, whether it is understood in the sense in which the locus derives its reality from the objects located in it, or its being compounded of them, as the whole is compounded of its parts, as Porphyry has claimed.

The second is the negation of His necessity in every respect, assuming that they subsist in Him, as he points out in these words: 'Or pertaining accidentally to it (that is, His essence), whereby it would not be necessary in every respect, which is absurd'. For, those forms, derived from other entities would not contradict His being necessary in Himself, since they would be dependent on Him and accordingly are in Him from Him, rather than another. On this assumption, this does not contradict what is said in *al-Ishārāt* with respect to acquired knowledge.

However, if his words are interpreted differently, they would amount to denying (God's) knowledge of things, or existing entities, from other things; that is, by means of cognitive forms, or He is necessarily self-subsistent and self-fulfilled, those forms being subsistent in Himself. They would then be contingent, subsisting in Him and are predicated of Him, and then He would not be necessary in every respect. Thus His knowledge of things ought to be derived from Himself, rather than from the forms. This is the truth, but it conflicts with what he says in *al-Ishārāt*, although it would have been confirmed, had he said that those forms are forms of perfection pertaining to Him. But if it is said that they are similar to external entities, such as pure substances, that would not contradict His being necessary in every respect. What is considered definite in His case is that, were these attributes of perfection, they would be identical with His essence; but if not of perfection, they would be such as to involve no change or succession with respect to Him. The detailed account of this subject in full will be given later.

Moreover, what al-Lawkarī mentions in his book *Bayān al-ḥaqq* (Explaining the Truth) refers to the First Being in two aspects where he says, 'The simple reason in the First is Himself. For that reason He is the origin of His detailed intelligibles and those intelligibles are the necessary corollaries of Himself, not in the sense of passion but rather that of action, and they are such that they are not to be considered as infinite insofar as they lack the natural order, nor are they to be considered as infinite but not according to that order, in which case no absurdity would follow.'

His (Ibn Sīnā's) student, Bahmanyār, says in his book *al-Taḥṣīl*, in these words, 'If the Necessary Being apprehends Himself, then He apprehends the corollaries of that self; otherwise He does not apprehend Himself in full. Those corollaries which are His intelligibles, even if they are regarded as accidents in being in Him, are not part of what qualifies Him or is affected by them. For the fact that the Necessary Being exists in Himself amounts precisely to His being the origin of His corollaries; that is, His intelligibles. For what emanates from Him actually emanates from Him following His existence in full. What is excluded is that His essence is a substratum of accidents, by which He is affected, perfected or otherwise qualified, His perfection consisting in the fact that those corollaries emanate from Him, rather than

belonging to Him, in the sense that they exist in Him. If He is said to apprehend those matters, then it is in the sense of them emanating from Him, rather than inhering in Him as their substratum. The corollaries of His essence are in fact the forms of His intelligibles, not in the sense that they emanate from Him and then He apprehends them, but rather in the sense that those forms, being immaterial, emanate from Him and are apprehended by Him. Therefore, His intelligibles are identical with His activity.¹ Moreover, the fact that His knowledge is active does not contradict its being posterior, not in the sense being passive, but in the sense of being posterior in point of correspondence. This will refute the claim of inconsistency in this context; God is the Lord of munificence and inspiration.

The statement in *De Anima*,¹ where he asserts, in the chapter entitled 'On the grades of the actions of reason and especially its highest grade, which is Holy Reason', the following: 'You should know that there is not in pure reason any multiplicity or gradation, such as one form is followed by another. It is rather the origin of every form that overflows into the soul, and this is how we should conceive of the condition of pure immaterial entities, where they apprehend particulars. For their apprehension is active reason, the creator of forms, but not those which belong to other forms or inhere in other forms...The apprehension of the soul of the world, insofar as it is a soul, is one of miscellaneous grades, and therefore, it is not simple in every sense. Now, every rational apprehension is actually simply a relation to a certain form, which is separate from matter and its material accidents, in the aforementioned manner: they pertain to the soul insofar as it is a passive entity susceptible to impressions; and to reason as an original, creative entity, so that what belongs to it as a principle thereof is its own rationality and what pertains to the soul, in its conception and receptivity, is its active rationality. What ought to be known with respect to the forms inhering in the soul is what I say. You should know that this discourse is one of the greatest principles of metaphysical enquiry.' (End.)

We might as well refer to what is thought to be a contradiction between what is said here and in *al-Ishārāt*, as the venerable Dawānī contends and then refers to its refutation, followed by the sheer verification and the essence of discrimination in the path of wisdom. For he then states first that he has asserted there that the (Almighty) apprehends things at once without His Essence incurring any plurality in the process or the reality of His essence receiving their forms. Their forms rather overflow from (His essence). This is followed by these words: 'He apprehends every thing through His essence',—which clearly negates the principle of the Almighty's knowledge of things by virtue of the inherence of their forms in His essence, asserting instead that He knows (all things) insofar as He knows Himself. It appears, then, that this contradicts, on the surface of it, what he says in *al-Ishārāt* in the seventh

1. *Kitāb al-Nafs*, ch. 7, 'On the Relation of Intelligibles to Him', to end.

section, entitled 'Illusion and Notification' that, 'You might say that if the intelligibles do not unite with the one who apprehends them, nor even with each other, they would not have been mentioned. Moreover, you have granted that the Necessary Being apprehends everything and therefore is not really one, but involves some plurality.' He then says, 'We hold that since He apprehends Himself by Himself, it follows from His subsistence as reason in itself that he must apprehend plurality as subsequent and posterior but not as being part of the essence and constitutive of it. It would also follow a pattern of order, for the plurality of corollaries of the essence, whether different or not, do not impair the unity.' (End.)

This shows that God's knowledge of things is acquired, although he then drew attention to the fact that it does not change in relation to His essence, due to the impossibility of plurality pertaining to His essence. For it is something posterior, not inhering in it so as to necessitate His composition from it, or being dependent on Him to the some degree. In fact, plurality cannot derive from true and pure unity, according to what he says, 'They also come into being according to the principle that some of them will precede others essentially, as happens with respect to the emanation of external plurality from Him, together with what it entails of cognitive forms and the like. Nor does it follow from this that it should be affected by aspects and circumstances pertaining to His true essence. Nor is there action or passion therein, because those forms are inherent in Him, from Him, not from another. Therefore, there is no essential affection therein from something essential, let alone temporal, so that He does not have to be either active or passive.' But his word 'differing' amounts to what he implied in saying, 'Not different from the cognitive forms, because they inhere in Him.'

It is clearly apparent from all this that God's knowledge of things is acquired, as the Milesian Anaximenes has held also, in saying that the form of every created entity whose form appears in the process of creation inhered already in the mind of its original creator.

The master, Dawānī, has stated that the apparent intent of the statement in *al-Ishārāt* suggests acquired knowledge, but in *al-Shifā'* (Ibn Sīnā) has explicitly rejected it, in these words: 'He apprehends things at once without being multiplied'. Secondly, he denies the incompatibility between this and what occurred in that book, but he has expressed in *al-Shifā'* a denial of that denial, in these words: 'You should know that the rational concept may be derived from the existing entity, as happens when we derive from the sphere by observation and perception its rational form, which is not derived from the existing form, but rather the opposite; just as we conceive a constructive form we invented and then that rational form will move our organs till it is found to exist. It will not then have existed and then we conceived it, but rather we conceived it and then it came to be. The relation of the whole to the First Reason and Necessary Being is this: He apprehends Himself and what that self necessitates and knows in

Himself the modality of the good's existing in the whole. Then His rational form would choose the forms of existing entities in the order conceived by Him, but not as corresponding to it, as light corresponds to the lighted object and warmth the warm object. Rather, He knows the modality of the order of the good in the existing thing and that it derives from Him.'

This is similar to what he says in this section of his book *al-Ishārāt*, preceding what we just quoted, to the effect by way of admonition:

'*Admonition:* The rational form may be derived in a sense from the external form, just as, for instance, the form of the sky is derived from the sky. However, the form might proceed first to the rational faculty, then acquire an existence from outside, as happens when we conceive a figure and then cause it to exist. What the Necessary Being apprehends of the whole must be of the second type.'

Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrīzī

Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrīzī, the famous philosopher, theologian, mystic and Shi‘i jurist, was born in Tabriz in the early part of eleventh/seventeenth century and died in Shiraz in 1080/1669. While the exact date of his birth is not known and his life remains shrouded in mystery, we do know that his long residence in Isfahan earned him the title ‘Iṣfahānī’, and in fact led Shāh ‘Abbās to grant him a house in the Shams-ābād neighborhood of Isfahan. Based on the information we do have of him, we know that after receiving his certificate of *ijtihād* (to become an authority able to give his own interpretation of Islamic Law) in Baghdad, Tabrīzī embraced Sufism and had particular interest in its practical aspects. It is said that he underwent austere forms of ascetic practice as a way to purify his soul while he was studying the intellectual sciences such as philosophy, theology and theoretical gnosis (*‘irfān*).

Despite Tabrīzī’s desire to distance himself from the court and worldly concerns, he enjoyed a great deal of respect in the courts of Shah Ismā‘īl II and his successor Shah Sulaymān. Some even say that Shah ‘Abbās himself became a follower of Tabrīzī and sought his counsel in religious matters.

While his teachers are not entirely known, based on his writings and references in his works, one can surmise that Tabrīzī benefited from the teachings of various masters belonging to the School of Isfahan, in particular Mīr Findiriskī, a view supported by the Islamicist Henry Corbin.

Among the notable students of Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrīzī one can mention Mullā Muḥammad Tunakābunī, Qāḍī Sa‘īd Qummī, Amīr Qawwām al-Dīn Muḥammad Isfahani, Mullā Muḥammad Shāfi‘ī Iṣfahānī and Muḥammad Rafī‘ī Pīrzādah.

Tabrīzī taught philosophy and intellectual sciences and appears to have been a rather staunch Peripatetic, translating the *Shifā’* and *Ishārāt* of Ibn Sīnā from Arabic into Persian. But he was also familiar with Platonism and Neoplatonism. A modern Iṣfahānī scholar, Afandī Iṣfahānī, maintained that while Tabrīzī was a master of theology, he was ignorant in matters pertaining to the religious sciences and Arabic

grammar. This matter, however, is not substantiated. Tabrizī, whose philosophical views were somewhat similar to Proclus' interpretation of Plato, considered Divine Reality to stand beyond Being and non-Being. Wrestling with the traditional concept of the chain of existence, he nevertheless embraced much of Ibn Sina's metaphysics. Tabrizī also rejected the idea of the unity and principiality of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd* and *aṣālat al-wujūd*) which is so central to Ṣadrian metaphysics.

His philosophically noteworthy works include the *Risālah* (Treatise), also known as the *Ithbāt-i wājib*, which consists of a series of discussions in which Tabrizī provides rebuttals to the views of Mullā Ṣadrā. A contemporary scholar, Āqā Buzurg Ṭihrānī has referred to this treatise as an elaboration upon the concept of *ishtirāk al-wujūd* (participatory existence) and *wujūd al-Bārī* (Being of God). Tabrizī also wrote a theological commentary in Persian on *Āyat al-kursī* (The Throne Verse [in *Sūrat al-Baqarah*]). This work was translated into Arabic after his death. A series of his lectures that his student Muḥammad Rafī'ī Pīrādāh wrote down under Tabrizī's supervision and entitled *al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah* (Divine Gnosis) can also be named among his major works. Finally, like Mīr Dāmād, Mullā Ṣadrā, Mīr Findiriskī and many other members of the School of Isfahan, Tabrizī wrote some philosophical poems that are both eloquent and profound.

In this chapter we have included sections from two of Tabrizī's major works, *Ithbāt-i wājib* (Proof of the Necessary Being) and *Aṣl al-aṣīl* (The Fundamental Principle).¹ In the introduction to the *Ithbāt-i wājib*, Tabrizī provides us with a synopsis of the book which consists of an introduction, five inquiries, and a conclusion, which all deal with the subject of the Necessary Being and its modalities.

In the introduction to *Aṣl al-aṣīl* (The Fundamental Principle) he states the following reason for the writing of this book:

In this treatise we would like to first discuss the well-known axiom amongst the philosophers—namely that 'none proceeds from the One but the one'—and to mention some of the corollaries attendant upon it, which themselves are principles for other corollaries [attendant upon them]. Secondly, we will demonstrate that most philosophical inquiries are corollaries of this axiom, thereafter mentioning in a very concise and brief manner some of the principles and correct opinions to which Aristotle and the rest of the ancients adhered. We have named the first principle the 'fundamental principle' in order to point out the distinction between it and the rest of the principles under discussion.

It is also interesting to note that both of the texts included here were well received during Mullā Rajab's lifetime.

M. Aminrazavi

1. Āshtiyānī tells us that another name for *Aṣl al-aṣīl* is *Aṣl-i āṣifiyyah*.

ON THE NECESSARY BEING

Ithbāt-i wājib

Translated for this volume by Mohammed Rustom from Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī, *Ithbāt-i wājib* in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī and Henry Corbin, ed., *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVII^e siècle jusqu’à nos jours* (Tehran, 1972–1975), vol. 1, pp. 220–243.

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings upon Muḥammad and his entire family. God says, *God does not forgive the ascription of partners to Him, but He forgives other than that* (4:48, 116).

This treatise consists of an introduction, five inquiries, and a conclusion:

Introduction: On the meanings of [the terms] ‘existence’, ‘homonymy’, and ‘synonymy’; mention of the names of those who upheld the position that between the Necessary and the contingent the terms ‘existence’ and ‘existent’ are homonymous.

Inquiry 1: On the Necessary Being.

Inquiry 2: On the oneness of the Necessary Being, that is, negating its being comprised of parts.

Inquiry 3: On the unity of the Necessary Being, that is, a general negation of its having any partners.

Inquiry 4: On the fact that the essence of the Necessary Being cannot be qualified.

Inquiry 5: On the fact that between the Necessary and the contingent the terms ‘existence’ and ‘existent’ are homonymous, not synonymous.

Conclusion: On those traditions which attest to the last two inquiries.

Introduction

The meaning of the terms ‘existence’ [*wujūd*] and ‘existent’ [*mawjūd*] is self-evident [*badīhī*], for ‘existence’ [*ḥastī*] and ‘existent thing’ [*chīzī ki ḥast*] do not require definition. Rather, it is impossible to define them, just as the philosophers and theologians have explained at the beginning of their books, having regarded them as the first of primary concepts [*awwal-i awā’il*].

‘Sharing’ [*ishtirāk*] occurs amongst several things with respect to [the meaning of] a term, or the term is shared [but carries different meanings], as in the sharing of the term ‘*ayn*’ between the [words] ‘sun’, ‘fountain’ and ‘eye’. The latter type of sharing

is referred to as ‘homonymity’ [*ishtirāk-i lafẓī*], whereas the former type is referred to as ‘shared terminology’ [*mushtarāk-i lafẓī*]. With respect to the former type, a term is shared by several things but does not [carry different meanings]. Rather, the meaning of the term is shared between them. This type of sharing is [also] referred to as ‘synonymity’ [*ishtirāk-i ma’nawī*], as in the term ‘animal’, which is shared between human beings and horses, with one term applying to both of them. But one must know that the terms ‘existence’ and ‘existent’ are shared between the Necessary and the contingent in a homonymous manner [*bā ishtirāk-i lafẓī*], [not in a synonymous manner]. Up to now, the opinion of the majority of people has been that nobody would adhere to this [position], and if there were such a person, his name would not be recorded amongst the famous scholars because of the weakness—according to them—of this position. They have spoken vulgarities, since the foundations of religion and belief are based upon proofs, not by following famous men!¹ For this reason, I am going to mention a group amongst the great ones who have adhered to this position, but whose names have been forgotten [in this regard].

In *Theology*, the First Teacher² says, ‘God originates the existence [*anniyyāt*] of things and their forms simultaneously.’³ That is to say that God originates the existence of things and their forms such that their existence and quiddities⁴ exist simultaneously.⁵ It is therefore known that the existence of things and their

1. By ‘famous men’ Mullā Rajab has in mind Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640) and his followers. For Ṣadrā’s ontology, see Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect and Intuition* (New York, 2010), chapter 2; Sajjad Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (London, 2009).

2. i.e., Aristotle. *The Theology*—a very important text for Islamic philosophy—is actually a paraphrase of parts of Plotinus’ *Enneads*. For an edition of the text, see ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, ed., *Aflūṭīn ‘ind al-‘arab* (repr. ed. Kuwait, 1977), pp. 67–164. An analysis of its main philosophical ideas, along with a comparative study of its content and the relevant sections of Plotinus’ *Enneads*, can be found in Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London, 2002).

3. This passage does not appear to figure in the *Theology*. I cite here a few similar passages: Badawī, *Aflūṭīn*, 51: ‘The Creator originates the existence of things and their forms...When He acts, He merely gazes upon Himself and His act takes place in one instant’ (cf. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, pp. 132–133); Badawī, *Aflūṭīn*, 160: ‘[A]ll intellectual forms originate in one instance, without any deliberation or reflection, because their Originator, being one and simple, originates simple things all at once’ (cf. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 127); Badawī, *Aflūṭīn*, 162: ‘The Creator originates things without deliberation.’

4. It is important to distinguish here between two types of quiddity: there is (1) quiddity in the most specific sense (*al-māhiyya bi-ma’nā’l-akhaṣṣ*) and (2) quiddity in the most general sense (*al-māhiyya bi-ma’nā’l-a’amm*). The first type of quiddity is simply the answer to the question, ‘what is it?’ The second type of quiddity, which is the kind being discussed here, is a thing’s essence proper, that is, that by virtue of which it is what it is. See Mohammed Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, NY, 2012), p. 171, n. 34.

5. Apart from one poem, all the texts cited by Mullā Rajab in this treatise are in Arabic, and are almost always followed by his own Persian paraphrases. In all but the present instance, these paragraphs have not been translated since they are more or less direct translations of

quiddities are both caused and created by God. If the meaning of [the term] ‘existence’ with respect to God in His essence refers to the meaning of [the term] existence that is to be found in contingent things, it would follow that He too is created. Aristotle also says, ‘The Pure One is the cause of all things, but is not like the things.’¹ It is therefore necessary that His existence be other than the existence of things. If not, then He would be like them.

In *Aphorisms of the Statesman*, the Second Teacher² explains it in this way: ‘His existence is outside the existence of the rest of the existent things, and does not in the least share with them in meaning. If there is sharing, it is in name only, not in the meaning predicated of that name.’³ The Muslim philosopher Aḥmad Majrīṭī⁴ also confirms this, as he says, ‘His existence is outside the existence of the rest of the existent things, and does not in the least share with them in meaning. If there is sharing, it is in name only, not in the meaning predicated of that name.’⁵

On the issue of God’s transcendence [*tanzīh*], the Sufis have not allowed [for Him] to even be named. This is what they say: ‘[He is] nameless, traceless, indescribable, and characterless.’⁶ How beautifully has the gnostic Shabistārī⁷ spoken concerning this issue!

His Essence is beyond quantity, quality, and modality.
Exalted is His Essence above what they say!⁸

Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī⁹ confirms this in his *Texts and Commentary on the*

the originals. The few instances in which Mullā Rajab’s Persian renderings do offer important interpretations of these Arabic texts have been indicated in the footnotes.

1. Badawī, *Aflūṭīn*, 134. Cf. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 218 n. 13.
2. i.e., The first Neoplatonic Muslim philosopher, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950).
3. Fārābī, *Fuṣūl al-madani: Aphorisms of the Statesman*, ed. and trans. D. M. Dunlop (Cambridge, 1961), 44 (English text), 127 (Arabic text).
4. i.e., Abū’l-Qāsim Maslamah al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), an Andalusian alchemist who may have introduced the writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ to Muslim Spain. Mullā Rajab appears to confuse him (as was common from the eighth/fourteenth century onwards) with the famous Spanish astronomer and mathematician Abū’l-Qāsim Maslamah ibn Aḥmad al-Majrīṭī al-Qurṭubī (d. c. 395/1004). Thanks go to Omar Alī-de-Unzaga for clarification on this point.
5. It is unclear whether or not ‘Majrīṭī’ is citing Fārābī.
6. Cf. William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY, 1989), pp. 59–66; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (2nd ed., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), 23–38; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science* (Albany, NY, 1993), chapter 1.
7. Maḥmūd Shabistārī (d. 720/1320), the famous Persian Sufi author of the *Gulshan-i rāz*.
8. *Munazzah dhātash az chand wa chih wa chūn / ta’ālā dhātuhu ‘ammā yaqūlūn*. This verse is to be found in Shabistārī, *Gulshan-i rāz*, ed. Javad Nurbakhsh (Tehran, 1976), line 31, p. 10, although the second hemistich has *sha’nuhu* instead of *dhātuhu*.
9. Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) was Ibn ‘Arabī’s step-son and foremost student. His writings had a lasting influence on later Islamic thought, particularly on Sufism and Islamic philosophy.

Chapter of Praise.¹ The statement from the *Texts* is as follows: ‘Concerning this, we say that He is ‘existence’ for purposes of comprehension, but not in the sense of existence [as such].’² Some of the Sufi shaykhs have stated that the general meaning of existence [*wujūd-i ‘āmm*] is a cause, which concurs with the position of some of the philosophers who believe existence to be instantiated first and quiddity second. The philosophers of India have also confirmed this position, saying, ‘God “exists”, but not in the sense that contingent things “exist”’.

Inquiry 1

The existent—that is, that which is called ‘existent’—is classified into two categories: it is either dependent upon another or not dependent upon another. We will call the first category ‘contingent being’ [*mumkin al-wujūd bi’l-dhāt*] and the second ‘Necessary Being’ [*wājib al-wujūd bi’l-dhāt*]. The first category—that which is dependent upon another—must be dependent upon that category which is not dependent upon another because it is Necessary Being, for that which is defined as belonging to other than the first category falls into the second category, which is Necessary Being. The existence of the first category is obvious, and does not require proof. The existence of the second category is not obvious, and [therefore] requires proof. The proof of its existence is derived from the existence of the first category, whose [existence] is obvious. We therefore say that whenever a being that is contingent by nature (i.e., dependent upon another) exists, there must be a Necessary Being upon which it is dependent, for although the former exists, it is a being that is contingent by nature. Therefore, the Necessary Being exists.

Inquiry 2

The Necessary Being cannot be composed of parts in any manner. If it were composed of parts, it would be contingent upon these parts in such a way that if these parts did not exist, it would not exist, which is a contradiction. Therefore, the Necessary Being is not composite.

Inquiry 3

The Necessary Being cannot be two or more than two, for if it were two, the meaning of [the term] ‘Necessary Being’ would undoubtedly be shared between them. There is no state in which this [shared] meaning, or the essence of the two, or part of their essence, or accidents of their essence, could exist.

The essence of both cannot exist because there is no state in which something

1. i.e., the Qur’ān’s first chapter, more commonly known as the *Fātiḥah* or ‘Opener’.

2. Cf. Qūnawī, *Risālat al-nuṣūṣ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran, 1983), p. 79.

can be joined to the Necessary Being such that it could become two or [remain] unjoined. If it were unjoined, then it would not become two. Rather, it would [still] be one. But if something were joined [to it], then they would both be contingent upon that which is shared [between them] and that which has been joined. They would thus not be the Necessary Being.

Part of the essence of both cannot exist, for if part of the essence of both were to exist, they would undoubtedly be compounded, and because of which they would not be the Necessary Being. Both cannot be accidental, for [if this were the case], whenever we would consider their essences without their accidents, they would not be qualified by existence and necessity. With respect to the necessity of existence [*wujūb-i wujūd*], they would be contingent upon accidents, and so neither could be the Necessary Being. On the contrary, they would be the 'Necessary Being' on account of accidents.

From another angle, if the necessity of existence were accidental, it would be passive to the necessity of existence or the Necessary Being (which is its cause), or to other than the essence of the Necessary Being. If it were [passive] to the Necessary Being, it follows that both would be passive and active at one and the same time, which is impossible. If it were [passive] to other than the essence of the Necessary Being, it follows that it would not be the Necessary Being. Therefore, it is clear from what we have explained that the Necessary Being cannot be more than one. On account of this demonstration, attention need not be given to Ibn Kammūnah's sophistic argument [*shubhah*].¹

Inquiry 4

The essence of the Necessary Being [*'ayn-i dhāt*] cannot be qualified by virtue of two proofs.

A general proof: [This] is the proof by way of negating union [*ittiḥād*], whether it be the union of two essences, two qualities, or an essence with a quality. This proof is well known amongst the philosophers. It is as follows: two things cannot be one because they would both be existent, or one would be existent and the other non-existent, or neither of the two would be existent, and a third thing would have to be introduced.

If there were two existents, they would not be unified. Rather, they would be two, not one. If one were existent and the other non-existent, they would not be unified because the union of that which is existent with that which is non-existent is unintelligible. If neither of the two were existent, they would also not be unified

1. Ibn Kammūnah (d. 683/1284) was a Jewish philosopher well-acquainted with Islamic philosophy. For the sophistic arguments attributed to him and their reception in Islamic thought, see Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad: 'Izz al-Dawlah Ibn Kammūnah (d. 683/1284) and His Writings* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 44–51.

for they would be opposed to each other, and a third thing would have to be introduced. Thus, union is impossible. And whenever union is impossible, the essence of the Necessary Being cannot be qualified.

A specific proof: A quality is a thing which, in its own essence and quiddity, is contingent upon and inheres in that which is qualified. It is not possible for something which is contingent upon something [else] in its own essence and quiddity and in which it inheres to be the essence of that thing. Therefore, the essence of the Necessary Being cannot be qualified.

Inquiry 5

Sharing of [the terms] 'existence' and 'existent' between the Necessary and the contingent is homonymous, not synonymous, for if the meaning of 'existence' and 'existent'—which are self-evident concepts—were shared between the Necessary and the contingent, that meaning would apply to the essence of the Necessary Being, or part of its essence, or an accident of its essence. Thus, we say that the essence of the Necessary Being cannot, [at the same time,] be that existence which is a self-evident concept, a contingent quality, and [that which] is dependent upon the essence of the contingent.

With respect to the first [possibility], this is because the meaning [of existence] is self-evident, while the essence of the Necessary Being is not self-evident. With respect to the second [possibility], this is because [existence] is a quality, and the essence of the Necessary Being cannot be qualified insofar as it is the essence of the Necessary Being. With respect to the third [possibility], this is because [existence] is contingent, and the essence of the Necessary Being cannot be contingent.

From another angle, [if the meaning of the term 'existence' is shared between the Necessary and the contingent,] then existence would require accidents, or not require them since it is self-subsistent, or require nothing. If it would require accidents, then wherever it is to be found, there would be accidents. It would therefore follow that the essence of God is accidental, which is impossible. If it would not require accidents, then it would follow that contingent existence is also self-subsistent in its essence. Therefore, contingent existence would not be contingent existence. If it would require nothing, then it would [nevertheless] call for a cause other than itself [insofar as existence is a quality of that which is contingent].¹ It would follow that the Necessary Being who subsists in His essence is [still] contingent upon another, which is impossible. Existence therefore does not pertain to God's essence.

And it cannot be that existence is a part of the essence of the Necessary

1. This last point is unclear if translated literally: 'If it would require neither, then the requirement of accidents and the non-requirement of accidents would [nevertheless] call for a cause other than itself [insofar as 'existence' is a quality of that which is contingent].'

Being because, as a corollary to this false position, it would follow that it is also compounded. But existence cannot be an accident of the essence of the Necessary Being because the cause of this existence would either be the essence of the Necessary Being or other than the essence of the Necessary Being. If it is the essence of the Necessary Being, then it would follow that the latter is both the cause of this existence and receptive to this existence, which is impossible. If it is other than the essence of the Necessary Being, then it would follow that the Necessary Being is contingent upon another for existence. It would thus be contingent being, not the Necessary Being.

It has become clear that between the Necessary and the contingent the meaning of [the term] ‘existence’ cannot be shared. Therefore, sharing occurs [between them] with respect to the term ‘existence,’ not with respect to the meaning that is predicated of it. From what we have demonstrated, it is clear that God does not have qualities.

Conclusion

The traditions which attest to the two previous inquiries are numerous, amongst which are the words of the Commander of the Faithful.¹ In *The Path of Eloquence*, he says, ‘The perfection of sincerity is to negate qualities from Him.’² Another saying [of his] which Shaykh Abū Ja‘far al-Kulaynī³ has mentioned in *The Sufficient* is as follows: ‘All things which possess qualities [*mawṣūf*] are created, and the Creator of things does not possess qualities [*ghayr mawṣūf*].’⁴

Moreover, there are the two sermons which Shaykh Ibn Bābawayh⁵ reports from Imam ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā⁶ in *The Book of Divine Unity*, which every Shi‘a must learn and upon which they should set straight their beliefs; rather, they should recite them continuously every day! In the first sermon, he says:

The first act of servitude is to know God, and the root of knowledge of God is His oneness [*tawḥīd*].⁷ The foundation of God’s oneness is to negate qualities from Him by way of intellectually witnessing that all qualities and things which possess qualities are

1. i.e., ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the first Shi‘i Imam and the fourth Caliph.

2. For this passage in context, see Chittick, *A Shi‘ite Anthology* (Albany, NY, 1981), p. 30. Mullā Rajab understands this sentence to mean that the perfection of both declaring God’s transcendence (*tanzīh*) and having sincerity towards Him lies in negating qualities from Him.

3. Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940), an important early Shi‘i theologian and traditionist.

4. Cf. the following citation.

5. Muḥammad ibn Bābawayh/(Bābūyah) al-Qummī (d. 381/991), an important early Shi‘i theologian and legal scholar.

6. The eighth Shi‘i Imam (d. 203/817).

7. In this and the following sermon, Mullā Rajab’s paraphrases make it clear that he understands *tawḥīd* to mean knowledge of God’s oneness (*yikī-dānistān*).

created; and by witnessing that all created things have a Creator who is not a quality and does not possess qualities, that all qualities and things which possesses qualities are related, that relations apply to temporally originated things, and that it is impossible for temporally originated things to be eternal, [that is], that which is impossible to be temporally originated.¹

Also from this sermon: 'Everything that is known in itself is created, and everything that subsists through other than it is caused';² 'Whoever describes Him has committed heresy with respect to Him';³ 'Whatever is to be found in creation is not to be found in its Creator. And whatever is possible with respect to creation is impossible with respect to its Creator.'⁴

In the second sermon, he says:

The first dimension of religion is to know Him, and the perfection of knowledge is His oneness. The perfection of God's oneness lies in the negation of qualities from Him by witnessing⁵ that every quality is other than that which possesses qualities, and that that which possess qualities is other than the quality.⁶

In *The Book of Divine Unity*, it is also reported that Imam Riḍā' said, 'Whoever likens God to His creature assigns partners to Him.'⁷

In *The Book of Divine Unity*, it is related that Abū 'Abd Allāh⁸ said, 'Whoever likens God to His creatures assigns partners to Him; God does not resemble anything, and nothing resembles Him. And whatever occurs to the mind, He is other than that.'⁹ In the traditions the following is recorded: 'Whoever likens God to His creation has committed heresy with respect to Him.'¹⁰

Therefore, the traditions that indicate the affirmation of qualities with respect to

1. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd* (Najaf, 1966), 17 (with slight differences). Cf. Chittick, *Shi'ite Anthology*, p. 45.

2. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 17 (with slight differences). Cf. Chittick, *Shi'ite Anthology*, p. 45.

3. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 17. Cf. Chittick, *Shi'ite Anthology*, 46. In his paraphrase on this saying, Mullā Rajab understands it to mean that the one who describes God 'has turned away from the truth' (*bar gashtah-ast az haqq*).

4. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 18 (with slight differences). Cf. Chittick, *Shi'ite Anthology*, p. 48.

5. Mullā Rajab's paraphrase of this passage adds *ba-tahqīq* here, thus rendering the sentence as follows: 'by witnessing, through verification, that every quality is other...'

6. cf. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 18; Chittick, *Shi'ite Anthology*, p. 48. If this is the passage Mullā Rajab has in mind, it forms a part of the original sermon cited above.

7. cf. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 39, where these words are attributed to Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 148/765), the sixth Shi'i Imam.

8. i.e., Ja'far al-Šādiq.

9. Ibn Bābawayh, *Tawhīd*, 42. The last sentence of this citation is a version of a well-known maxim in Islamic thought, often attributed wrongly to Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 248/861), an early Sufi. See Rustom, 'The Sufi Teachings of Dhu'l-Nun', *Sacred Web* 24 (2009): 72.

10. cf. Kulaynī, *Uṣūl-i kāfī*, tr. Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī (Tehran, 1965), 1:146–147 (Persian text), 1:147 (Arabic text). Cf. also the saying cited above: 'Whoever describes Him has committed heresy with respect to Him.'

God—such as knowledge, power, etc.—are to be explained by way of interpretation, as did Imam Muḥammad Bāqir:¹

Is He not called ‘knowing’ and ‘powerful’ only because he bestows knowledge upon the knowledgeable and power upon the powerful? Whatever distinction you make using your imagination in coming up with the most precise of meanings is created and designed for your sake, and [therefore] returns to you. But the Creator is the one who gives life and determines death. It just might be that an insignificant ant imagines God to have two tentacles like it does, and conceives their nonexistence to be a deficiency in the one who does not have them. Such is the case of those who use their reason in their descriptions of God.²

Thus, God’s being ‘knowing’ and ‘powerful’ means that He bestows knowledge upon the knowledgeable and power upon the powerful.

Or, [the traditions that indicate the affirmation of attributes to Him must be understood according to] the second interpretation that the Imams have carried out, saying that He is ‘knowing,’ that is, He is not ignorant; and that He is ‘powerful,’ that is, He is not incapable. The qualities of perfection are affirmed by negating their opposites, which lie on the side of imperfection. The early philosophers held this position, saying that every quality of perfection that can be attributed to the essence of God—even the necessity of existence [itself]—returns to a negation of the [qualities] which lie on the side of imperfection. Thus, the attribution of ‘existent’ to God carries this sense, since it is not ‘contingent,’ neither in the sense that necessity and existence are accidents of the essence of God and are subsistent such that the essence of God [comes to] carry the meaning of ‘existence’ [and] ‘existent,’ nor in the sense of ‘necessity’ in the way that it applies to contingent things. *Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of majesty, above what they describe. Peace be upon the Messengers, and praise be to God, Lord of the worlds* (37:180–182).

1. The fifth Shi‘i Imam (d. 114/732).

2. cf. Ṣadrā’s different uses of a version of this tradition in Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran, 1987), 1:180–181, 3:133, 4:106 (in particular). See also the translated passage in Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy*, p. 134.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

al-Aṣl al-aṣīl

Translated for this volume by Mohammed Rustom from Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī, *al-Aṣl al-aṣīl*, in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī and Henry Corbin ed., *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVII^e siècle jusqu’à nos jours* (Tehran, 1972–1975), vol. 1, pp. 244–271.

[1. None Proceeds from the One but the One]

In this treatise we would like first to discuss the well-known axiom amongst the philosophers—namely that none proceeds from the One but the one¹—and to mention some of the corollaries [*furūʿ*] derived from it, which themselves are principles for other corollaries. Secondly, we will demonstrate that most philosophical inquiries are corollaries of this axiom, thereafter mentioning in a very concise and brief manner some of the principles and correct opinions to which Aristotle and the rest of the ancients adhered. We have named the first principle the ‘fundamental principle’ in order to point up the distinction between it and the rest of the principles under discussion. I have written this as a reminder for both myself and those whom God the Exalted desires to benefit thereby. God is the helper, and from Him I seek assistance.

The first principle—which we refer to as the ‘fundamental principle’—is that only the one can proceed from the Pure One [*al-wāḥid al-mahḍ*], who is simple in every respect. That this claim is self-evident in the eyes of the intelligent is based upon a premise, namely that we necessarily know, with respect to a cause’s essence and substance, that it has some type of relationship [*munāsabah*] and specificity [*khuṣūṣiyyah*] in relation to its effect. In a nutshell, in its essence there must necessarily be an aspect which corresponds to the procession [*ṣudūr*] of its effect

1. For this axiom (*lā yaṣḍuru min al-wāḥid illa’l-wāḥid*) in Islamic thought, see Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, tr. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT, 2005), pp. 328–330; Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of the Human Intellect* (New York, 1992), 75ff. This doctrine is inspired by but yet distinct from the Neoplatonic teaching on how multiplicity emerges from the One. See Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle* (London, 2002), pp. 137–138; John Dillon and Lloyd Gerson (ed. and tr.), *Neoplatonic Philosophy: Introductory Readings* (Indianapolis, 2004), pp. 83–86, 264, 266–267. For a rejection of the notion that only one proceeds from the One, see Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, tr. Michael Marmura, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT, 2000), pp. 65ff. For Ibn ‘Arabī’s nuanced understanding of this doctrine, see William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany, NY, 1998), pp. 18–19, 148–149, 229 (objection); 75, 137, 169 (approval). Cf. Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, *Risālat al-nuṣūṣ*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran, 1983), p. 74.

from it. This relationship is the specifying cause [*al-‘illah al-mukhaṣṣiṣah*] for the procession of its specific effect from it, not any other effect.

If there were not in the cause's essence and substance a corresponding aspect designated for the procession of this specific effect from it—not any other effect—the procession of this specific effect from it would not be more apt [*awlā*] than the procession of any other effect. This would demand preponderance [*tarjih*] without a preponderator on the side of the cause, which is undoubtedly inconceivable.

This essential correspondence which we have mentioned is equivalent to the disposition [*malakah*] of artisans with respect to their crafts, such as the disposition of the poet in relation to poetry. This disposition is the designated cause for the procession of poetry from the poet, not any other craft. If this is granted, then we can say [the following]: the efficient cause of *A*, in its essence and substance, in some manner corresponds to *A*, [serving] as a designated cause for its procession from it, not for any other effect. If we were to suppose that another effect could proceed from it, namely *B*, for example, then the efficient cause of *A* would necessarily also have an essential correspondence in relation to *B*. This correspondence would then either (1) be the same correspondence as the first correspondence—which is necessarily impossible, because the element corresponding to a thing can never in itself correspond to what is distinct [*mubāyin*] from that thing because the correspondence attributed to one of two distinct things is distinct in relation to the other distinct thing, and that which is distinct from something cannot in itself correspond to that thing; or (2) [this correspondence] would be other than the first correspondence, thus entailing compoundedness [*tarkīb*] in the essence of the aforementioned efficient cause after we had supposed it to be absolutely simple [*basīṭ*], which is absurd.

From another perspective, the procession of *B* from its efficient cause would either be evident through the same essential correspondence which this efficient cause has in relation to *A*, [or it would not be]. [The former] is impossible because the correspondence which must act as the specifying cause for the procession of *A* cannot be a cause for the procession of other than it, namely *B*. If that were the case, *B* would necessarily be *A*, which is absolutely impossible. Take, for example, how it is impossible for the disposition of poetry to be a cause for the procession of [something] other than poetry, such as writing. If that were the case, ‘writing’ would have to be ‘poetry,’ [which is impossible]. We have other clear proofs and various remarks to make in order to prove this point. However, this should suffice those who have the innate disposition for philosophy and do not require further clarification.

This axiom is a great support for philosophy [*falsafah*] and a clear basis for metaphysics [*hikmat*], from which many corollaries derive, each one of them also serving as the basis for other corollaries, and those for others and so on until [this] results in specific questions, to some of which we shall allude, with God's assistance.

Corollary: Corollaries derive from the fundamental principle (that only the one proceeds from the First One). Demonstration of this principle is clear by virtue of His simplicity in every respect and His being far removed from compounded things, be they mental or extra-mental (exalted is God beyond that!).

Another Corollary: Based on what we have mentioned, it is known that the Necessary Being cannot be described by that general, self-evident type of existence [*al-wujūd al-‘amm al-badīhī*] which is predicated of things because He is the efficient cause of this existence. And it is impossible for the efficient cause of something to be receptive to that thing. With this in mind, what becomes apparent is the falsity of the position of the later philosophers [*al-muta’akhhirūn*], namely that between the Necessary and the contingent ‘existence’ is synonymous [*ishtirāk ma’nawī*].¹

Another Corollary: Now that you have come to know that there is an essential correspondence and a substantial specificity [*khuṣūṣiyyah jawhariyyah*] between cause and effect, what connects the procession of one thing from another is this essential specificity [*al-khuṣūṣiyyah al-dhātiyyah*] and corresponding meaning. This being the case, then, likewise, when the cause is noble, it necessitates that its effect also be noble. If the effect is not noble, then the cause cannot be noble. If the cause is noble and yet we suppose its effect to be lowly, what would be the cause’s essential correspondence [in relation to its effect]? How could there be an essential specificity between the two, given the fact that the essence of the cause is noble, whereas the substance of the effect is lowly? This is because a noble thing is that from which nobility is derived and noble things appear, whereas a lowly thing is that from which lowliness is derived [and lowly things appear]. What is known from this is that whenever the cause is noble, its effect is also noble.

Since the First occupies the utmost rank of nobility (rather, He occupies the ultimate rank of perfection and nobility; better yet, He is pure perfection and nobility itself), the effect which comes from Him is the most noble of effects. This is why ‘The first thing that God created was the intellect,’² as the lawgiver³ said. Then the effects ensued from it—one proceeding from the other—descending in accordance with their nobility until the descent ended with a lowly effect completely devoid of nobility and [which was] below everything else. On account of this demonstration, there arises no need for the principle of ‘the contingency of the most noble’ [*imkān al-ashraf*], which is well known amongst the philosophers, and whose upshot we have mentioned, namely that things are in need of His

1. By the ‘later philosophers’, Mullā Rajab clearly has in mind Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers. For Mullā Rajab’s refutation of the synonymy of the term existence, see his *On the Necessary Being* in the present volume.

2. For this famous tradition, which appears under several different guises in texts of Islamic thought, see Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, p. 273; Ghazzālī, *Kitāb Mizān al-‘amal* (Beirut, 1979), p. 89; Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Tehran, lithograph, 1984), 483–484; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Tehran, 1987), 3:242.

3. i.e. the Prophet.

essence, [beginning with] the most noble thing, followed by the [next] most noble thing and so on until [the process] ends with the lowest thing.¹ This was also an acceptable principle amongst the ancient philosophers but [its demonstration] is *a posteriori* [innīyyah], whereas this demonstration of ours is *a priori* [limmiyyah], as you have come to know.

[2. A Refutation of Substantial Motion]

There is corollary which derives from the [previous] corollary, namely with reference to prime matter [*hayūlā*]: since it has been established that bodies are comprised of form [*ṣūrah*] and prime matter, it is evident to us that there are things in bodies which are receptive to other things, and that these things may obtain for bodies after not having been existent in them. This could only be possible through motion in the sense of generation and corruption. It is therefore affirmed, by virtue of the existence of prime matter in bodies, that bodies are receptive to motion in the sense of generation and corruption.

Since this discussion ended with the mention of motion, we must speak about it at greater length as it is an indispensable and useful issue which many have been unable to understand. According to the correct opinion, motion is the quality of change amongst mutable things [*mutaghayyarāt*]. Change takes place in two ways: (1) simultaneously, as occurs in generation and corruption, and (2) gradually, which is motion [proper]. The definition of motion as given by Aristotle is as follows: ‘Motion is the first perfection of that which exists in potentiality *qua* its existing in potentiality.’² This definition, as we understand it, means that a moving body [*mutaharrik*] has two perfections. The first of these³ is that in which its motion terminates—namely that towards which its motion tends—such as a particular location in which the motion of a body terminates. The second of these⁴ is motion itself, which precedes the perfection we first mentioned.⁵ Motion therefore is the first perfection of that which exists in potentiality, namely a moving body. Indeed, the first of the two perfections actualized by a moving body is its motion [towards that which it tends], and then [the second perfection is actualized through its termination in] that towards which it tends.

The usefulness behind the qualification ‘*qua* its existing in potentiality’ lies

1. For the argument of the contingency of the most noble in context, see Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, ed. and tr. John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Provo, UT, 1999), pp. 107–112. See also Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany, NY, 1975), p. 156. Cf. Dillon and Gerson, *Neoplatonic Philosophy*, pp. 265–266.

2. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, 201a11 in Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ, 1984), 1:343.

3. i.e. The second perfection.

4. i.e. The first perfection.

5. i.e. The second perfection.

in the fact that when a moving body is discussed not in terms of its existing in potentiality but in terms of its existing in actuality, its motion cannot be established. Motion is an accident for something when that thing has potentiality. But when a thing's potentiality ceases—for example the intellect—transitive motion is not possible for it, just as it is impossible for a body which we deem perfect in every respect. On account of this qualification another key point arises, [and] from which the discussion of generation and corruption derives. It is for one to say that motion is the first perfection for that which exists in potentiality insofar as it exists in potentiality in relation to that towards which its motion tends. For this first perfection—which is motion—occurs by way of considering its existence in potentiality, that is, its second perfection which is that towards which the moving object tends. When this second perfection is not present in any sense but there is one perfection, as is the case in generation and corruption, an object's motion cannot be a transitive first perfection.¹

Since our discussion on motion has been prolonged without any effort on our part, it has become necessary to append to it an exposition of the impossibility of substantial motion [*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*].² This is also an indispensable and beneficial issue. From the time of its appearance a party from amongst the distinguished scholars have upheld its impossibility. Its exposition [is as follows]: if we suppose something to be in a state of substantial motion from a fixed beginning to a specific end, these two points would have to exist between finite motions. The moving object would therefore emerge in the end, since in the beginning of its motion it would not have subsisted as an individual entity [*bi'l-shakhs*] or anything else. If in the end it subsists as an individual entity or something else, just as it was in the beginning, then it will not have been in a state of motion. Rather, it will have been in a state of rest. Yet we have supposed it to be in a state of motion, which would entail absurdity. If in the end it subsists as an individual entity other than what it was in the beginning, its motion would also not be realized because the moving object must subsist in every movement, just as it did in its [initial] state.

From another perspective—[the assent to] which is even more repulsive and absurd than what we have just mentioned—if we suppose something to be in motion in its substance, its substance will have to be other than its substance in order for the moving object to be in a state of substantial motion. This is because

1. A lucid exposition of this discussion can be found in Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *The Elements of Islamic Metaphysics*, tr. Sayyid 'Alī Qūlī Qarā'ī (London, 2003), pp. 99–101. For a detailed treatment of motion in Islamic philosophy, see Avicenna, *The Physics of the Healing*, tr. Jon McGinnis (Provo, UT, 2010), 1:107–156.

2. For this well-known famous Ṣadrīan doctrine, see Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, ed. Riḍā Luṭfī and Ibrāhīm Aminī (Beirut, 1981), 3:79ff. See also Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Ṣadrā*, tr. Jeff Fort (New York, 2006), pp. 97–203; Ibrahim Kalin, 'Between Physics and Metaphysics: Mullā Ṣadrā on Nature and Motion', *Islam and Science* 1/1 (2003): 59–90.

whatever is in a state of motion must be other than the moving object, just as it was in its [initial state]. This would also require that the moving object be both subsistent and non-subsistent as an individual entity. The former requirement would obtain because of the necessity in every instance of motion for the moving object to subsist as an individual entity. The latter requirement would obtain because of the object's being in a state of substantial motion and its therefore never actualizing its essence. This would further entail the position that the moving object be divested of its essence and emerge from it, be in a state of motion in its essence, and terminate in its essence, all the while it being necessary for it not to be divested of its essence because of the necessity of the subsistence of the moving object as an individual entity. The absurdity of this [position] is more manifest than the sun in broad daylight, but it is not possible for its inadequacy to [easily] occur to the mind. Nor is it useful to speak of, let alone have belief in, as is evident. So understand and reflect assiduously, for these subtleties which we have mentioned are noble and rare problems, the likes of which are not to be found in the honoured books [of those who uphold the impossibility of substantial motion].

[3. The Primacy of Essence]

Another Principle: Know that quiddity *qua* itself is nothing but itself.¹ This principle is well known and agreed upon by the philosophers. No one denies it because of the self-evidentiary nature of this concept. This is because each thing *qua* that thing can only be that thing. Many important and useful corollaries branch out from this principle through which ruptures in metaphysics, on account of the impact of the thoughts of the ignorant and the contestations of the people of disputation, are set straight.²

Corollary: If quiddity *qua* itself is nothing but itself, then an extra-mentally existent quiddity is either an extra-mental quiddity only, or it is a quiddity accompanied by extra-mental existence. If it is an extra-mental quiddity only, it cannot be existent because quiddity *qua* itself is nothing but itself, as you know. Yet here we suppose it to be existent, which would entail absurdity. If extra-mentally there is no quiddity only, but rather quiddity accompanied by existence, then extra-mental existence must accompany quiddity but not in the sense that existence is an extra-mental existent, since this would entail circularity in existence itself. Rather, [it must accompany quiddity] in the sense of its existing extra-mentally by virtue of

1. That is, quiddity 'in the most general sense'. For the two types of quiddity, see, in the present volume, Mullā Rajab's *On the Necessary Being*, p. 286, n. 4.

2. The imagery that is implied in this last sentence is almost impossible to faithfully communicate in translation. The idea here is that the useful corollaries which branch out from the principle in question can help repair the body of metaphysics, whose bones have become fractured as a result of the assaults carried out on it by ignorant thinkers and those given to vain disputation in philosophical matters.

your knowledge that it is impossible to ever pin down. For this reason, it is affirmed that an existent extra-mental quiddity is accompanied by extra-mental existence on account of what is in the mind, as is the philosophers' position, one and all.

Another Corollary: If it is affirmed that existence accompanies quiddity extra-mentally, then it is affirmed that existence be concomitant with quiddity extra-mentally in the sense that it is posterior to quiddity because the existence of a thing is a corollary of the thing and necessarily follows it. If existence follows quiddity and is its corollary, the instantiating act [*jaʿl*] of the agent must attach to quiddity firstly and essentially, and then existence can be concomitant with quiddity because it is self-evidently impossible for the agent to first cause the corollary of a thing and its concomitant, and then [to cause] its basis and that with which the thing is concomitant. If not, then that with which the thing is concomitant would itself have to be concomitant and the concomitant would be that with which the thing is concomitant, which is impossible. This would be like causing evenness to come about before the number four, or like first building the upper part of a house and then the lower part. This is plain to see.

Based on what we have said, it is clear that quiddity is instantiated without existence, as one group amongst the distinguished scholars have upheld. The languages in common usage also assume the instantiation of quiddity without existence, for one says, 'So-and-so moves his hand and writes.' That is, 'He instantiates motion and writing,' without saying, 'So-and-so gives existence to motion and writing' or 'So-and-so causes motion to become an existent.' As it is said in Persian, 'I am moving and writing,' without saying, 'I am making motion existent' or 'I am giving existence to motion and writing.' The self-evidentiary nature of such statements is itself witness to the veracity of what is spoken and the falsehood of what is unspoken. Such is the case with the rest of the languages in common usage amongst the masses, as in Turkish, where it is said, 'I did something' [*falân iş eyledim*], that is, 'I brought about a certain effect,' without saying, 'I gave existence' [*vücūd verdim*],¹ that is, 'I gave existence to a certain effect'. The likes of these are not unknown to those who study languages and reflect upon them properly.

[4.] A Discourse Proving the Falsity of Mental Existence

This demonstration [proving the falsity of mental existence] rests on two premises. One of them is self-evident, namely that when there is knowledge by way of the apprehension of a form in the mind—as is the later philosophers' position—it must be a knowable mental form derived from something [external] which belongs to the species of this thing. For example, if we sought to obtain knowledge of a certain

1. Both Turkish phrases have been rendered by Shiraz Sheikh.

species of a substance, its form would necessarily have to be knowable from this species because of the impossibility of knowing a substance from its accident, or of the form ‘man’ from the form ‘horse’, [for example].

The second premise is based on reflection, resulting in the necessity that for every material form there be a specified matter disposed towards it,¹ and that it is not possible for the form to inhere in other than it. According to the philosophers, this premise is irrefutably demonstrable, but it is not the place to discuss this [claim]. Since you know this, we say that the mental form of fire, for example, must be known—based on what you know self-evidently—from a [corresponding] extra-mental species because of the impossibility, for instance, of knowing what fire is by examining water. Based on what you know through reflection, there must be for this mental form of fire a specified matter disposed towards it so that this form may inhere in it. If this is the case, [one could ask] why the mind is not set aflame when the form of fire is acquired mentally, despite the fact that it is a material form which inheres in the material specified for it, as is the case with the extra-mental form of fire, given that absolutely no change is supposed to take place between them in any way, neither formally and actually, nor materially. It is therefore useless for them to say that the condition for the burning [of the mentally existent form of fire] is extra-mental existence because the concomitants of quiddity cannot be separated from quiddity, neither mentally nor extra-mentally. If it were possible for the concomitants of quiddity to be separated from quiddity mentally, it would be possible to separate evenness from the mentally existent concept of four, which is absurd. This, likewise, is due to the absence of a distinction between mental and extra-mental existence.

The form of fire which they say is a mental form is only ‘mental’ in speech, since it is actually an extra-mental form. But in their opinion there is no difference between the form of fire which resides in the mind and the rest of the things which reside in the mind, despite the fact that they do not say that the latter—such as the colours and their mixtures which reside in the mind, like the redness in blood and the yellowness in bile—are also mentally existent entities. Why would these extra-mentally existent things and the extra-mental forms of fire be mentally ‘existent’ just because they share in both being things which ‘inhere’ [*amrān ḥallān*] in the mind? The claim that there is a distinction between mental and extra-mental existence is clearly nonsensical. It is therefore evident that any talk of mental existence is completely impossible, and that a person with a sound intellect and correct understanding would not affirm it. Allowing for this would be like trying to fit Mount Damavand into a shoe!² As for their saying that the quantity of the mentally-existent form is less than that which possesses form [extra-mentally],

1. That is, to the reception of form. See Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, pp. 57–70.

2. For this majestic mountain, see *EIR*, s.v. ‘Damāvand’.

this does not entail the difficulty just mentioned for such a claim is to be rejected [at the onset].

[5. On How the Soul Knows]

Know that the soul is the greatest name of God: *And He taught Adam the names, all of them* [2:31]. To truly be Adam, to know all the names, is to know the soul and the modality of its knowledge of existents other than itself. Since the impossibility of mental existence has been made clear to you, the way the soul knows extra-mental existents becomes evident, namely that it knows the existent entities through their concrete existence [*a'yān al-mawjūdāt bi-a'yānihā*], not through their forms and states of mental existence because that is impossible, as you know. All things are therefore known by the soul in their essences [*bi-dhawātihā*], some by means of sensory organs [*ālat*] and others without sensory organs.

The things which the soul knows by means of sensory organs are those things which are particular and sensible, such as heat, coldness, lights, colours, sounds, and other objects of sense perception. From these, the soul knows the principles [*al-mabādi'*] and separated substances [*al-mufāraqāt*] by way of reflection and acquisition. As for the things which the soul knows without sensory organs, they are the universal natures and the realities of the existent things in themselves. All of these are known to the soul through its knowledge of its own essence and its witnessing the realities of the things in the mirror of its essence. This is because the reality of the soul is a comprehensive entity [*ḥaqīqah jāmi'ah*] which brings together every existent (exalted or lowly, immaterial or material), this not being hidden from one who smells the sweet fragrance of the soul and knows its station amongst the stations of extra-mental existence. It is as if the Commander of the Faithful and Proof of the Gnostics¹ alluded to this [in these lines]:

Do you deem yourself to be an insignificant body,
while within you is contained the macrocosm?
You are the *Clear Book* [12:1, *et passim*]
through whose letters the hidden becomes manifest.²

One should know that the universals and particulars of all things are known to the soul through one faculty, not through numerous faculties, as most of the

1. i.e. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the first Shi'ī Imam.

2. These verses are attributed to Imam 'Alī and can be found in *Dīwān Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muṣṭafawī (Beirut, 2005), p. 72. Cf. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), p. 84; Ṣadrā, *On the Hermeneutics of the Light Verse of the Qur'ān*, tr. Latimah Peerwani (London, 2004), p. 95; Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ*, 3:334; Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. Muḥammad Khwājawī (Qom, 1987–1990), 6:22.

later philosophers uphold. However, the soul's functions [*af'āl*] are numerous and diverse by virtue of the numerous sensory organs [it employs] in accordance with the objects of [its] perception [*al-mudrakāt*]. Take, for example, a carpenter. He has one faculty, while its functions are diverse in accordance with the numerous specified organs required for carrying out [his tasks]. The soul, likewise, also has one faculty because of its simplicity and through which all things are known, be they sensible or intelligible. Indeed, it perceives the intelligibles in the same manner that sensory objects and the objects of taste and touch are perceived, but the loci and organs of its perceptions—like the [example of] the carpenter—are diverse, some being known without sensory organs, and some with sensory organs. It therefore hears by means of the nerves located in the auditory canal, and sees by means of the eyes, etc.

The soul perceives the intelligibles and the universal natures through its very essence, which is also the same perceptive faculty used to perceive objects of sense perception. However, in terms of the soul's perception of particulars, it is as if they are external to it by way of its [employment] of sensory organs, and that upon its perception of the intelligibles they return to its essence which brings together everything by virtue of its simplicity, as we said a moment ago. This point is subtle, rare, and [seemingly] incomprehensible. Knowledge of this depends on knowing the soul as it truly should be known, which is exceedingly difficult. Rather, it is impossible, despite the efforts of the people of our time in acquiring true wisdom!

Just as the soul knows the realities of the extra-mental existents in [their] essence without acquiring [their] forms, so too does it perceive the essences of visible objects [*mubṣarāt*] and their natures without acquiring [their] forms in the eye, or anything else, as most of the later philosophers uphold. This is the heart of what we have established in [our] demonstration of the refutation of extra-mental existence, so pay close attention! If we see Zayd, for example, we see the reality of an existent man externally, but [we see this reality] in the arrangement of its individual accidents which comprise Zayd. In this way [does the soul know] visible objects, so do not be heedless!

Concerning this point, one of the things one must know here is that whenever the soul perceives something by way of the senses, it is not possible for it to know the thing's universal nature and the reality of its species, because 'Whatever cannot be sensed cannot be known.'¹ As for the things perceivable by the outward senses, they are perceived by the soul through their concrete existence, specific contingencies, and individual accidents, as you know. However, for every one of them [this occurs] by means of their respective sensory organs. So the objects of vision are perceived through the eyes, and the objects of touch through the skin on account of the nerves spread throughout the body. All of these are perceived by the

1. Lit., 'Whoever is deficient in sense [perception] is deficient in knowledge.' Cf. Ṣadrā, *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, tr. William Chittick (Provo, UT, 2003), p. 37.

soul through one faculty: the faculty for hearing is not other than the one for sight, nor [is the faculty for] sight other than the one for touch and taste. These faculties are none other than the holy and intellectual rational faculty through which the soul comprehends the realities and universal natures of things. Indeed, these faculties are the rational faculty itself. In terms of nobility, this level of perception is the lowest and meanest of the soul's levels of perception. It obtains for all humans and most animals, so long as they are of sound disposition. As for the things which are perceivable by the internal senses—such as conceptual things—they are perceived in their essences through their concrete existence, except in the case of some things which are perceived in their individualities and quantities when they are the essences of quantities, and in their colours when they are the essences of colours.

Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī

Muḥammad ibn Shāh Murtaḍā ibn Shāh Maḥmūd, known as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, was one of the two most outstanding students of Mullā Ṣadrā. Born in Kashan in 1007/1600, he studied in that city and later also spent some years in Qom where he died in 1091/1680. It was while he was studying with Mullā Ṣadrā in Shiraz that he married one of the master's daughters.

Kāshānī's early education in Kashan and Qom took place under the direction of his father and several scholars in the area, but news arrived that a famous scholar, Sayyid Mājīd Baḥraynī, had migrated to Iran and had established residence in Shiraz. Mullā Muḥsin's desire to go to Shiraz to study with him met with the opposition of his father who thought that as Qom was graced with the presence of major scholars there was no need for the young man to travel far away. It has been noted by Mullā Muḥsin's biographers that he consulted the Qur'ān (*istikhārah*) and came up with verse 9:21, which encourages people to travel in order to acquire knowledge in religion. It was then decided for the young Mullā Muḥsin to go to Shiraz where he joined the circle of Shaykh Baḥrānī and studied the Qur'ān, jurisprudence, and *ḥadīth* with him.

While in Shiraz Fayḍ Kāshānī met Mullā Ṣadrā and began to study philosophy, logic and theoretical gnosis with him becoming one of his most famous students. Mullā Ṣadrā was so impressed by Kāshānī's acumen, that he bestowed upon him the title of 'Fayḍ' (meaning emanation and also beneficent). Upon the completion of his studies with the two great scholars and having received permission from the other master, Shaykh Bahā'ī, to make independent rulings (*ijtihād*) with regard to Islamic law, Mullā Muḥsin returned to Kashan where he taught philosophy, and propagated Ṣadrian thought. His tendency towards Sufism and '*irfān*' put him on the path of confrontation with the exoteric '*ulamā*' some of whom condemned his teachings and even accused him of not being a Shi'a. It is said that one of his opponents called Mullā Muḥammad Ṭāhir, a jurist in Qom who had accused Mullā Muḥsin of heresy, later on towards the end of Fayḍ's life walked to Kashan and begged his forgiveness.

Mullā Muḥsin, coming a generation after such great masters as Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Bahā'ī, Mīr Findiriskī and Mullā Ṣadrā, became a proponent of Ṣadrian philosophy and his life was dedicated to the harmonization of reason, revelation and gnosis with lesser emphasis upon discursive reasoning.

Similar to Mullā Ṣadrā, Fayḍ Kāshānī represents the height of Shi'ī gnostic thought, which incorporates the thought of Ibn 'Arabī along with a gnostic reading of some of the earlier Muslim philosophers into a Shi'ī gnosis which is based to a large extent on the teachings of the Shi'ī Imams. He was criticized by some for his mystical tendencies at a time when exoteric jurists dominated the religious life of the Safavid Court. In his *Lu'lu' al-Baḥrayn* (The Pearls of Bahrayn), Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī criticizes Fayḍ Kāshānī and Mullā Ṣadrā, calling them 'heretical mystics'. However, Khwansārī in his *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* (The Gardens of Paradise), defends Kāshānī against the charges of heresy and considers his defense of Shi'ī Imams and their epistemic role in reaching Divine knowledge to be indispensable to Islam.

In addition to his philosophical interests, Fayḍ Kāshānī, who belonged to the Akhbārī school of thought, was recognized as an authority in the science of Qur'ānic commentary and *ḥadīth*. Like many other Akhbārīs, Fayḍ Kāshānī rejected the claim that people had no right to pass judgment on matters pertaining to jurisprudence and the jurists' view that people must accept their judgment in order not to be heretical (*kufṛ*). Kāshānī was also an authority on Shi'ism and philosophical ethics and a poet of note.

In this chapter we have selected excerpts from two of Fayḍ Kāshānī's most important works: *Kalimāt maknūnah min 'ulūm ahl al-ḥikmah wa'l-ma'rifah* (Hidden Words concerning the Knowledge of Those Who Possess Wisdom and Gnosis'), and *al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah* (Divine Sciences) both of which have been especially translated for this volume.

In *Kalimāt maknūnah*, Fayḍ Kāshānī undertakes a thorough discussion of the idea of the Perfect Man as the self-manifestation of the Absolute within the context of Shi'ī mystical philosophy. He also develops here a major philosophical scheme to explain the process of Self-manifestation or emanation. Fayḍ Kāshānī next treats the subject of prophets, sages and saints. Following the philosophic-gnostic formulations of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, another Shi'ī thinker, Kāshānī sees all the prophets and imams as diverse manifestations of the Perfect Man. Kāshānī categorizes these topics into four types: absolute prophethood (*nubuwwah*), absolute sainthood (*walāyah*), limited prophethood and limited sainthood. Finally, Kāshānī turns to an investigation of various aspects of the Perfect Man and its modalities using both gnostic and discursive discussions and *ḥadīth* sources.

In *al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah*, Kāshānī offers a concise and inclusive discussion concerning most of the key concepts in Shi'ī gnosis. He elaborates on existence and

non-existence, the Divine Essence and how existence (*wujūd*) transforms itself in its descent from the realm of absoluteness to earth and its gradation in levels of determination. He then treats such topics as the principles of the various modes of Being, the realities of existents and their animating powers, forms and receptacles. These are a few of the concepts that Kāshānī presents in what may be considered a concise and comprehensive work on gnosis.

M. Aminrazavi

HIDDEN WORDS¹

Kalimāt maknūnah

Translated for this volume by Shigeru Kamada from Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Kalimāt maknūnah* (Tehran, 1382 Sh./2004), *Kalimah* 51–56 and 82.

Kalimāt [51]

A Discourse which Alludes to the Meaning of the Manifestation (zuhūr) and the Locus of Manifestation (maẓhar)

The people of gnosis (*ahl-i maʿrifat*) say: the locus of manifestation of a thing is its form. The form of a thing signifies that through which the thing is convinced, either in intellect, in imagination, or in sense perception. The manifestation of a thing is its differentiation (*tamayyuz*) and determination (*taʿayyun*), just as the manifestation of a genus, for example, on the level of species is its differentiation and determination through those specified. The manifestation of a species on the level of individuals is its differentiation and determination through those which are individualized. Every locus of manifestation is different from that which is manifest in it. That which becomes manifest in a particular locus of manifestation does so through its form and shape, not through its essence (*dhāt*). This meaning is also clear from [an example of] a mirror or water and what is reflected in it. However, the loci of the absolute manifestation of the Truth (*Haqq*) do not follow this mode. [This exception] is because, in the loci of Divine manifestation, that which is manifest and its locus of manifestation are unified with each other, and the difference between them is in absoluteness (*itlāq*) and limitation (*taqayyud*). For example, the absolute reality of humanity is that which is manifest from the viewpoint of [its] limitation through those who are individualized. Indubitably, the absolute reality is its very individuals which are its loci of manifestation.

Therefore, [in the Divine manifestation] a locus of manifestation is nothing but that which is manifest. This is apparent in a locus of manifestation through its essence, not through its form and shape. That which is manifest in determination and limitation follows its locus of manifestation. A realized locus of manifestation follows that which is manifest. Therefore, the locus of manifestation has a status of being the primary (*awwalīyāt*), insofar as that which is manifest in it follows it; while it has a status of being the last (*ākhirīyāt*), insofar as it follows that which is manifest. A locus of manifestation insofar as it is the locus of manifestation is

1. The complete title of this text is *Kalimāt maknūnah min ʿulūm ahl al-ḥikmah waʾl-maʿrifah* (Hidden Words from the Sciences of the People of Wisdom and Gnosis) which we have abbreviated to *Hidden Words*. This work is written both in Arabic and Persian but due to their intertwined nature we have not marked them in the text.

hidden (*bāṭin*), because it possesses the modality of a mirror in such a way that it is not the mirror, but the form which appears when a mirror reflects a form. Therefore, the manifestation of an attribute (*ṣifah*) is due to that which is manifest, and not to its locus of manifestation. The hidden dimension [i.e., that of the locus of manifestation] of that which is manifest is nothing but the same as that which is manifest, though it is viewed from its precedence over the state of manifestation. The hidden dimension of that which is hidden, though we know it in a general way, is the unseen aspect of the ipseity (*huwiyyat*) of the essence, for every determined thing is preceded by non-determination.

Kalimāt [52]

A Discourse which Alludes to the Difference of the Existents in their Being Loci of Manifestation

Those who have gnosis say: external existents are different with regard to their qualification as being loci of the manifestation of divine names and attributes, for they are loci of the permanent archetypes (*a'yān-i thābitah*). The permanent archetypes are forms of the essential qualities (*shu'ūnāt*), and these qualities are different in absoluteness, universality (*kulliyyat*), collectivity (*jām'iyyat*), and their opposites. Some forms are in perfect absoluteness, and there are no other determinations beyond them in the degrees of determination, such as the first determination beyond which no determination is. Some forms are in perfect limitation such as individual particular determinations. The others are between the two degrees of the perfect absoluteness and the perfect limitation just as all the other realities. In like manner some forms are in the perfect collectivity, and no qualities are excluded from their comprehension. Some are of the kind which encompasses some qualities, namely various realities of the world with exception of the perfect man (*insān-i kāmīl*).

The excellence of perfection is found in the collectivity of qualities (*khaṣā'iṣ*) of perfect human individuals like prophets and *walīs* (sages).¹ Prophets and *walīs* also differ from each other in this excellence. The reason is as follows: Although all prophets and *walīs* are equal in their being the loci of manifestation of all the names, some, on the one hand, are those in whom the mode and trace of some names are more manifest and dominant, and the other names are dominated and classified under the former, such as prophets of the Israelites.² Some are, on the other hand, those in whom the names and attributes are moderately manifested without being

1. The word *walī* (pl. *awliyā'*) is derived from an Arabic root W-L-Y which has a general meaning of 'near' or 'close'. It is also closely associated with the concept of a friend. Hereon it means a person who has special closeness to God and to whom He grants supernatural qualities. Specifically in the Shi'i context it denotes a Shi'i Imam. See *Kalimāt* [82] below.

2. Manuscript no. 1328 of the Central Library of Tehran University [Abbreviated as MS in the following notes] runs: prophets except ours.

dominant or dominated, like our Prophet, May God bless him and his Household. 'Of those messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some unto whom God spoke, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree' (2:253).

Kalimāt [53]

A Discourse which Contains Allusions to the Idea that the Divine Names Claim the Manifestation of the Truth in the Loci of Manifestation: and that the Locus of Manifestation of the Name 'God' is the Perfect Man

Those who have gnosis say: the presence of the Truth. Glory be to Him and the Most High, does not need the world and what is in the world through His essence. But the infinite Divine Names need the world, for each of them has a locus of manifestation so that a trace of that name may manifest itself in a particular locus of manifestation. The named, who is the Essence, His rank be the Most High, appears as splendid to the eyes of one who believes in the unity of God, as it does to the Beneficent (*Raḥmān*), the Provider (*Razzāq*) and the Subduer (*Qaḥḥār*). Every one of the above is one of the names of the Truth, Glory be to Him and the Most High, and the manifestation of that [glory] is possible through [the pair of] a beneficent (*rāḥim*) and a beneficiary (*marḥūm*), a provider and a provided, and a subduer and a subdued (*maḡḥūr*). This is possible because beneficence is not manifest as long as both a beneficent and a beneficiary are not present in the external world. Similarly, provision, subdual and all the other names must be like this. Therefore, on account of the manifestation of the Truth in the entirety of particular existents, the names of the Truth, His rank be glorified, are sought. All the names are comprehended under the name Allah, which includes the entirety of names and comprehends all existents. The name 'God' also demands a particular locus of manifestation of all, and that locus has correspondence to the comprehensive name by virtue of its comprehensiveness. Therefore, the locus may be a vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*) in his conveyance of [Divine] emanation and perfection from the name 'God' to the others.

That comprehensive locus of manifestation is the perfect man, who is a treasure-house of the Divine lights and a hidden treasury of the uncountable [Divine] emanations, rather he is a treasure-house of all existence and the key to the entire treasuries of generosity.

What was that love which a friend (*dūst*) kneaded in my soil?
It was like a treasure that a beloved (*yār*) placed in my heart.

Unless the gardener of the eternal sows it in my soil [and takes care of it] with his own hands, every morning in forty days, a seed of the rose would not remain.

Kalimāt [54]

A Discourse which Explains that the Reason of the Creation of Man is his Being the Locus of Manifestation of the All and his Comprehensiveness of Existence (kawn).

The people of gnosis (*ahl al-maʿrifah*) say: the single ipseity (*huwiyyah*) is in real unity (*waḥdah*) and the modes of unity in it are dominant over those of multiplicity (*kathrah*).¹ The modes of multiplicity are effaced under the first unitive force in the stage of the spiritual union (*jamʿ maʿnawī*). Next, they manifest in as scattered divergent loci of manifestation as those of these concrete worlds, by way of particularization and differentiation, insofar as the multiplicity in their modes is dominant over the modes of unity, in accordance with the claim of actual differentiation and concrete particularization. Then, the Truth wills that He manifests His essence in a perfect locus of manifestation. The locus includes all the other illuminated loci of manifestation as well as the shadowed loci of appearance. It also comprises the entire realities, both secret and open, and encompasses all the particles, both hidden and manifest. The ipseity necessary for its own essence cognizes its own essence without any addition to its essence. There is nothing distinguished from the ipseity either in intellection or in concrete reality. In the same way, the attributes and names of the ipseity are cognized as supersensible essential relations without their having to manifest their traces or distinguish one trace from another in concrete forms.

Then, the Divine Ipseity manifests itself in particularized forms of differentiated loci of manifestation, namely, the loci of manifestation of these worlds. The manifestation is according to a specified will and various levels of dispositions (*istīʿādāt*), and through different means (*wasāʾiṭ*). Thus, the Divine Ipseity does not cognize its essence and its reality insofar as it comprehends the entire concrete perfections and all the divine attributes and names. Thus, their manifestations in every determined locus of manifestation and appearance are in accordance with nothing except that locus of manifestation. Do you not know that the manifestation of the Truth in the spiritual world, Glory be to Him, is not like His manifestation in the corporeal world? In the first case it is simple, active and luminous; but in the second it is composite, passive and opaque. The Divine Ipseity emanates voluntarily to the universal locus of manifestation and to the comprehensive universe of existents present to the Divine Order, which includes the meaning of the real perfect collective oneness to which no increase is conceivable regarding its completeness and perfection. An increase is inconceivable because the Divine Ipseity manifests according to the real perfect oneness and cognizes its essence comprehensively. It [the Divine Ipseity] is the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). He comprehends both, being the locus of manifestation of the absolute essence, and that of the names, attributes and acts. His comprehension is done through the

1. The translation here follows the reading of the MS.

collectivity (*jam'iyah*) and the moderation (*i'tidāl*) in his universal mode of being and through the abundance and the perfection in his being locus of manifestation. He also comprehends both the necessary realities, or relations of divine names, and the possible realities, or the attributes of creation. He comprehends both the levels of collectivity and of particularization. He encompasses all the levels in the chains of existence. As one of the thinkers said in the language of the unitive state:

When I see the image of my beauty in a mirror,
 the world turns into my form in reality.
 The sun in the sky is my manifestation.
 Do not wonder if the atoms of existence are the loci of my manifestation.
 What are the spirits of the sacred realm? They are the representation of my reality.
 What is the form of man? It is the container of my image.

Kalimāt [55]:

A Discourse which Contains Allusions to the Idea that the Perfect Man is He who Comprehends Various Kinds of Knowledge in its All Degrees: and that He is like an Eye of the Truth

Those who have gnosis say: when man changes his existential attributes to real ones, and his eyes of insight are strengthened with the kohl powder of the unity, then he with all his faculties and perceptive organs witnesses the beauty of the Truth and cognizes Absolute Existence (*wujūd-i muṭlaq*) in the entire loci of appearance and manifestation. The fruit of the tree of His creation is nothing but this knowledge and insight.

Man is eye while the other are all skin.
 The eye of man is that of the Beloved.

The niche of the self-determinations of the witness' light and the mirror of the differentiations in manifestation of the existence are the perfect man's pure heart and cognitive understanding. The place of collecting all sorts of knowledge and cognition of the oneness in the unitive state (*aḥadiyyat-i jam'*) is his knowledge and cognition.

The reality penetrating the whole cognizes its essence through both its essence and the concomitants besides its essence, in a supersensible cognition (*idrāk ghaybī*) comprehensively locating itself in the perfect man, who is the comprehensive existent (*al-kawn al-jāmi'*). He includes all the other loci of manifestation and contains the totality of [various levels]. Thereafter, the reality cognizes the essence and its concomitants together in the perfect man through some of the self-determinations and the Divine Names in particularized intellectual cognition in accordance with its

receptacles. The reality also cognizes them through some self-determinations and other names, in estimative and imaginal cognition, in accordance with the other receptacles.¹ Thirdly it cognizes [them] through some self-determinations and other names in a sensible cognition in accordance with its receptacles to which those self-determinations attach themselves. It thus cognizes all through the all in accordance with the all in the complete perfect cognition with nothing added to it at all:

An ocean of knowledge is concealed in dew;
a world is concealed in a three cubit body.

The perfect man is for the Truth, Glory be to Him, like a pupil of the eye (*insān al-‘ayn*) through which sight is possible. He is explained by the sight through which he sees a thing and perceives it. Because of this he is named ‘man’ (*insān*). Through the man [the perfect man—pupil] the Truth sees His creation and has mercy upon them. Through his excellence He conveys existence and emanation to them. The perfect man is the originated in pre-eternity (*al-ḥādith al-azalī*) and the everlasting existent in post-eternity (*al-nash’ah al-dā’im al-abadī*),² just as is recorded in a prophetic tradition: ‘We are the last (*ākhirūn*) and the foregoing (*sābiqūn*).’³

Prior to celestial bodies they have seen Saturn.
Prior to grains⁴ they have seen bread.
In the midst of grape they have seen wine. In sheer extinction
they have seen something.
Prior to the creation of grapes they have drunk wine and been embarrassed.⁵
In hot summer they see winter. In the sunshine they see shadows.

The distinction between the pre-eternal archetypes or spirits and that of their Originator is as follows. The pre-eternity of the Truth is a negative quality, with negation of the beginning in the sense of the beginning of existence, not [beginning] from non-existence, because it is existence itself. On the other hand, the existence of the pre-eternity of archetypes and spirits depends on the continuance of the Truth with the beginning of existence from non-existence because of its [their existence] being different from it [the pure existence].

1. This sentence is added from MS.

2. This paragraph is a quotation from Abu’l-‘Alā’ ‘Afīfī, ed., Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Beirut, n.d.), p. 50.

3. cf. A. J. Wensinck et al, ed., *Concordances et indices de la tradition musulmane*, vol.2 (Leiden, 1936–88), p. 402b. e.g., *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. M. Dīb al-Bughā, Dimashq, vol.1 (1990) 300 (no.836).

4. I follow the reading *dān* in MS instead of *dhāt* in the printed text.

5. In these verses we find echoes of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s well-known poem, the *Khamriyyah*. See its text and translation in A. J. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry. A Primer for Students* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 126ff.

Kalimāt [56]

A Discourse which Contains Allusions to the Idea that the Perfect Man is the Manager of the World through the Divine Names; and that He is a Mediator to Make the Truth's Emanation Reach the Creation

Those who have gnosis say: the perfect man is like the spirit of the world while the world is its body. Likewise, the spirit manages and administers the body with the spiritual and bodily faculties which work in the body. In this way the perfect man manages the world and administers it by means of the Divine Names which He deposits in him, teaches to him and combines with his nature. They are like faculties of the spirit. Every reality is one of the realities of the essence of the perfect man. His mode of being (*nash'ah*) is an intermediate sphere (*barzakh*) insofar as the oneness is achieved in his mode of being by the combination of anyone of the realities of the ocean of necessity and any one of the realities of the ocean of possibility as a locus of its manifestation. Possible reality is the throne of necessary reality, and reality of necessity sits down on it.

When the unitive, perfect self-manifestation takes place in the perfect human locus of manifestation, it receives the unitive, perfect self-manifestation through the reality of the perfect unitive oneness (*ahadiyyah*). The secret of this self-manifestation pervades every one of the realities in the essence of the perfect man. Thus, from it, the light of the self-manifestation emanates to the world which is correspondent to the essence of the perfect man. The blessings and favours taking place on the merciful self-manifestation do not reach the realities of the world except after their self-determination (*ta'ayyun*) in the perfect man through the highest work, which is not found in the self-manifestation before its self-determination in its being the locus of manifestation for the perfect man. The realities of the worlds¹ and their archetypes are his subjects, and he is His vicegerent (*khalifah*) over them. Incumbent upon the vicegerent is the care of his subjects in the most suitable and most appropriate way. Concerning this care vicegerents differ from each other in excellence.

In general, the Truth, Glory be to Him and the Most High, manifests Himself in the mirror of the heart of the perfect man, who is His vicegerent. The reflection of the lights of self-manifestations emanates across the world from the mirror of his heart. On the arrival of that emanation the world continues to exist. As long as this perfect man remains in the world, he gathers the essential self-manifestations from the Truth. They are the Merciful and Compassionate through the Names and Attributes, whose loci of manifestation are these existents. Therefore, by this process of gathering and by emanation, self-manifestations are preserved as long as this perfect man is [the locus of] it. No meanings come out to the outer from the inner without his judgment, and nothing comes to the inner from the outer

1. I follow the reading *al-'awālim* in MS instead of *al-'ālam a'yān-hā* in the printed text.

without his order, even though this perfect man is not aware of his role in the state of the dominance of his human nature. 'He is the intermediate sphere (*barzakh*) between the two seas and the screen between the two worlds.' It is alluded to by His saying, Glory be to Him: 'He has loosed the two seas. They meet. There is a barrier (*barzakh*) between them. They encroach not (one upon the other)' (55:19–20). That is to say, it [the intermediate sphere, or the perfect man] leaves them separate from each other¹ and does not mix one up with the other:

To the world you are heaven and earth. I do not know who you are, whatever you are.

In the words of our master al-Ṣādiq, Peace be upon him, as transmitted from him, 'We are the created (*ṣanāʾī*) by God, and thereafter, people are created for us.'² One of the gnostics says: 'Since you know a piece of iron glowing and working, do not wonder of a soul (*nafs*), when it is lighted, illumined and shines by the light of God and then all the creatures obey it.'

***Kalimāt* [82]**

A Discourse which Alludes to Prophecy (nubūwwah) and Sainthood (walāyah)

The perfect man is either a prophet or a *walī*. Both prophecy and sainthood are to be considered from two points of view. One is that of absoluteness (*iṭlāq*), and the other is that of limitation (*taqyīd*). In other words, from the view of the general (*ʿāmm*) and the specific (*khāṣṣ*). As for absolute prophecy, it is real prophecy actualized in pre-eternity (*azal*) and remaining in post-eternity (*abad*). It is knowledge of the prophet specific to the absolute prophecy, concerning the preparedness (*istiʿdād*) of the entirety of existents, according to their essences and quiddities. Absolute prophecy is also giving to everyone who is qualified to have a right, his right, which he demands by the tongue of his preparedness insofar as it is the essential notification, the pre-eternal real instruction which is called the greatest lordship (*al-rubūbiyyat al-ʿuẓmā*) and the mightiest dominion (*al-salṭanah al-kubrā*). The owner of this position is named the greatest vicegerent (*al-khalīfah al-aʿẓam*), the pole of poles (*quṭb al-aqṭāb*), the macroanthropos (*al-insān al-kabīr*), the true Adam. He is also explained as the highest pen, the first intellect, and the greatest spirit. This is alluded to by Muḥammad's saying, God bless him and his Household:

'The first of what God created is my light, and I was a prophet even while Adam was between water and clay'³ and so on. Founded on him are all sorts of knowledge

1. I follow the reading of *khallāhumā* in MS instead of *kilāhumā* in the printed text.

2. This expression is found as that of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Kitāb 28.

3. The first half of this *ḥadīth* is found in the *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 25, p. 22. Its second half is a well-known *ḥadīth* among mystics. For example, Ibn 'Arabī, *Fūṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 64, 214.

and work. To him finally return all of the degrees and the positions, either prophet or *walī*, messenger (*rasūl*) or trustee (*waṣī*).

The inner dimension of this prophecy is absolute sainthood. Absolute sainthood means the actualization (*ḥuṣūl*) of the totality of these perfections according to the inner dimension in pre-eternity and their enduring in post-eternity. Absolute sainthood finally goes back to man's extinction in the Truth and his enduring with Him. It is alluded to by Muḥammad's saying, God bless him and his Household:

'I and 'Alī are of one light. God created my spirit and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's spirit two thousand years before He created men. He sent 'Alī secretly with every prophet and openly with me.'¹

In a saying of the Commander of the Faithful ['Alī], Peace be upon him, 'I was a *walī* even while Adam was between water and clay.'² Limited prophecy is communication of the divine realities, that is, of the knowledge of the essence of the Truth and His names, attributes, and judgments. If a prophet combines with it execution of judgments, giving moral education, instruction of wisdom, and carrying out government, it becomes legislative prophecy (*nubūwwah tashrī'īyyah*) and is especially called prophethood (*risālah*). Determine the meaning of limited sainthood by an analogy with absolute sainthood. Both prophecy and sainthood are absolute, insofar as they are divine attributes, and limited, insofar as they are based on prophets and *walīs*. The limited is supported by the absolute while the absolute is manifest in the limited.

The prophecies of all the prophets are the particular aspects of absolute prophecy. In this way, the sainthoods of all the *walīs* are the particular aspects of absolute sainthood. All of the four groups have a seal, namely, a level above which is no other level or a position, over which is neither prophet nor *walī* except an individual specific to it; but all finally return to the seal. Even if the existence of the clay of the owner of prophecy or sainthood comes later in the order of time, the seal is existent in reality before its actual existence. The seal of absolute prophecy is our Prophet Muḥammad, God bless him and his Household: the seal of absolute sainthood is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Peace be upon him: Limited prophecy becomes perfect and reaches its goal step by step. Its root begins with Adam, Peace be upon him, and continues to grow and to be perfected until its perfection arrives at our Prophet, God bless him and his Household. Because of this Muḥammad, is the seal of the prophets.

1. A group of *ḥadīths* which convey the idea that Muḥammad and 'Alī (and further, the other Imams) share the same pre-existential origin are collected in the *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol.25, pp. 1–36.

2. Ibn 'Arabī mentions in his *Fūṣūṣ*, p. 64: 'The seal of *walīs* was *walī* even while Adam was between water and clay.'

This is alluded to by what is related from him, God bless him and his Household: ‘Prophecy is something like a house under construction, all of which are completed except the place of a brick. And I am that brick,’¹ or similar expressions. In this way, limited sainthood proceeds step by step toward perfection until it reaches its goal. The goal is the Mahdī, who promised his manifestation, who is the master (*ṣāḥib al-amr*) of this age, and ‘the remnant of God’ (11:86), today within His land and people, God’s blessings and peace be upon him and his infallible fathers.

1. cf. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 3, 1300 (nos.3341f.); *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, vol. 15 (Beirut, n.d.), pp. 50–52.

al-Ma'ārif al-ilāhiyyah: Uṣūl al-ma'ārif

Translated for this volume by Shigeru Kamada from Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, 'Uṣūl al-ma'ārif' in Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī and Henry Corbin, ed., *Muntakhabāti az āthār-i ḥukamā-yi ilāhī-yi Irān* (Anthologie des philosophes iraniens) (Tehran, 1371 Sh./1992), vol. 2, pp. 154–187.

Chapter 1

On Existence and Non-existence and therein lies the Knowledge of the Essence.

Existence (*wujūd*) transforms itself in its descent from the heaven of absoluteness to the earth of determination, step by step. It starts from the noblest [state] and finally reaches a state where nothing is coarser in possibility or weaker than it. The chain of descent concludes therein. It then resumes its ascent and continues to rise from lower to higher until it finally reaches a state where nothing in this chain of ascent is higher than it. It faces that from which it started its descent as shown by His saying, Glory be to Him: 'He directeth the ordinance from the heaven unto the earth; then it ascendeth unto Him' (32:5). The closer to its Origin it is, Glory be to Him, the closer to simplicity, unity and self-sufficiency, and the further from differentiation, composition and need it is. On the first level (*martabah*), it [existence on this level] needs nothing, either for its subsistence or for any of its attributes and actions, except its everlasting Originator (*mubdi'uhu al-qayyūm*), His Name be exalted. The members on this level are called intellects ('*uqūl*'), spirits (*arwāḥ*), and intimate angels (*malā'ikah muqarrabūn*) (4:172; 56:11) according to difference of their stages. On the second level it needs nothing save what is above it, but it needs those on the levels below it for its actions and attributes. Its members are called souls (*nufūs*) and the directive angels (*malā'ikah mudabbirūn*) (79:5) according to the difference of their ranks. On the third level it needs, for its subsistence, what is below it as well. They are called forms (*ṣuwar*) and natures (*ṭabā'iyi*). On the fourth level it has nothing except the mode of possibility (*imkān*) and potency (*qūwwah*). It has no thing-ness in its own self (*fī dhātihi*) except the receptivity of things. It is called matter (*māddah*), water, dust and primordial matter (*hayūlā ulā*). With them [these forms] is the end of the direction of the divine decree (*amr*). Then it [existence] starts its ascent. The first which appears in it is a compound of matter and form, and is called body (*jism*). Thereafter, the body is specified in a higher and nobler form, through which it becomes that which has the [powers of] nutrition and growth. It is called plant. Thereafter, its specification is intensified in another form higher than what is below it, through which it becomes that which has

sense and motion. It is called animal. Thereafter, its specification is intensified in a form higher and better, through which it becomes that which has reason (*nuṭq*). It is called man (*insān*). Man has many levels [to the extent] that he possesses an acquired intellect (*'aql mustafād*). Herewith the circle of existence is completed, and the chain of good (*khayr*) and generosity (*jūd*) ends.

When existences (*wujūdāt*) begin, they appear [at first] intellect, then soul, then form, and then matter. They return in a reverse manner just as they rotate around themselves: namely they are [first] bodies with forms, then become plants, then animals, and [at last] men with reason. Existence starts from intellect and ends with [the same] intellect. 'As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him)' (7:29). 'As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it' (21:104). Nobility and perfection are based on the closeness to the supreme Truth. In the beginning everything that comes is richer in its specification, while in the return everything that comes is higher in its position. The beginning is alluded to by the Night of Power (*laylat al-qadr*),¹ the bringing down of the Books and the sending of the spiritual messengers (*rusul ma'nawīyyīn*). 'The angels and the Spirit² descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees' (97:4). [On the other hand] the return is [alluded to] by the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyyamah*) and the spiritual ascent (*mi'rāj ma'nawī*). 'The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him in a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years' (70:4). Both [the beginning and the return] are illustrated in traditional reports (*akhbār*) by [the words of] 'draw near' and 'turn its back'. Our master Ṣādiq, Peace be upon him, said, 'God created intellect. It is the first creation of the spirituals, (*rūḥāniyyūn*) on the right side of the throne by His light. He ordered it to turn its back, so it turned its back. Thereafter, He ordered it to draw near, so it drew near. Then God, the most High, said, 'I created you as a great, powerful creature, and exalted you above all My creatures.' And he [Ṣādiq] said, 'Thereafter, He created ignorance from the bitter sea as darkness. Then He ordered it to turn its back, so it turned its back. However, when He ordered it to draw near, it did not draw near. So He said to it, 'You are haughty,' and He cursed it.'³ Thereafter, he [Ṣādiq], Peace be upon him, mentioned, 'The soldiers of the intellect are of good (*khayrāt*), while the soldiers of ignorance are of evil (*shurūr*).'⁴ He, Peace be upon him, means ignorance to be that which is the opposite of intellect, in such an opposition as similar to that of lack and possession, because ignorance of existence is relative to non-existence insofar as it deals with the existence of non-existence.

1. The Night of Power is a night in the month of Ramadan, on which the Qur'ān was believed to have been sent down. *Ṣūrah* 97 describes the night as 'better than a thousand months'.

2. The Spirit (*al-rūḥ*) here is generally understood the Angel Gabriel (*Jibra'il*) who brought down the revelation to the Prophet Muḥammad.

3. Kulaynī, *al-Uṣūl min al-kāfī*, ed. 'Alī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Tehran, 1388/1968), I, p. 21.

4. cf. *Kāfī*, I, pp. 21–23. The report in the *Kāfī* gives a detail list of virtues and vices, respectively constituted of seventy-five names as the soldiers of intellect and ignorance.

This will be investigated in the section on the explanation of the meaning of pain.¹ Ignorance follows intellect and is distinguished by it. Ignorance, whose existence is accidental without producing [any external reality], or 'turning its back', [by itself] follows entirely the intellect's 'turning its back' and 'drawing near'. It does not draw near, simply because it attained, through its 'turning its back', the utmost level of the perfection imagined in its own capacity. On account of this it became haughty.

All these levels are, despite the difference of their stages (*darajāt*), interconnected continuously, both in the [process of] beginning and in that of return, in such a way that there is no breach in existence. This is based on the principle of the noblest possibility in origination, [i.e., it is nothing but the noblest possible that emerges in origination], which is handed down from the ancient philosophers (*ḥukamā'*). The principle is that unless the possibility of a nobler [entity] exists, the possibility of the existence a lower [entity] cannot exist (*qā'idat imkān ashraf*). Otherwise, the aspect of the creation of cognition of the noblest would not be left to the Originator. If the noblest is supposed to be an existent which demands an aspect nobler than that on which is the Originator, it is absurd. The lower is always based on the higher. The lower does not exist unless the higher exists before it [the lower]. Like this God's customary practice (*sunnah*) is carried out; 'We send not down the angels save with the truth' (15:8). The last of any level is connected with the first of the [following] level which is lower or higher than that. Rather, the last of any one of the stages stands on the same level connected with the first of the following stage which is lower or higher [than that]. Therefore, the last of the levels of the divinity (*ulūh iyyah*), which are after the level of the [divine] essence (*dhāt*) transcendent over the attributes, is connected with the first of the stages of intellect. The last of the stages of the first intellect is connected with the first of the stages of the second intellect, and [the rest in] like manner. Any of the intellects is not limited in a particular limit supposed to be indivisible, rather every one of them [intellects] has an ample share of beneficent existence (*al-raḥmah al-wujūdiyyah*) through the infinite stages. Among lower intellects are those which are close to souls. Among human souls are those which are nearly those of some animals. Among non-human souls are those which do not need mediation of the ethereal spirit (*rūḥ bukhārī*) like vegetable and mineral souls. Among minerals are those which are close to the organization of plants, like corals. Among plants are those which are close to animals, like palm trees.² Among animals are those which are close to men in their rational faculty and others, like monkeys and others. Among men are those who are nearly intellect. Everyone who has perfection in anyone of the levels encompasses the entire perfections which are below it.

1. cf. Chapter 9, 'Concerning Good and Evil, and Pleasure and Pain,' of the *Ūṣūl al-ma'ārif*, pp. 164ff.

2. Palm trees are divided into male and female.

Chapter 10

On the Principles of the Modes of Being, the Realities of Existents and their Spirits, Forms and Receptacles. Herein lies the Gnosis of Interpretation of Ambiguous Verses and of Dream Reading.

Principle (aṣl)

The worlds are so many that no one knows their number except the Lord of the Worlds. Their origins are traceable to three modes of being; [1] the intelligible and spiritual (*‘aqliyyah rūḥāniyyah*) mode, which is called the world of the unseen or *Jabarūt*, and whose members are ‘the foremost in the race: Those are they who will be brought nigh in gardens of delight’ (56:10–12); [2] the imaginal and apparitional (*khayālī mithālī*) mode, which is called the intermediate world (*‘ālam al-barzakh*) or *Malakūt*, and whose members are ‘those on the right hand among thornless lote-trees and clustered plantations’ (56:27–29); [3] sensible and bodily (*ḥissiyyah jismāniyyah*) one, which is called the world of witness (*‘ālam al-shahādah*) and *Mulk*, and whose members are ‘those on the left hand in scorching wind and scalding water and shadow of black smoke’ (56:41–43).

As for the intelligible mode of being, it is the mode of being of real life, the eternal continuation, the pure good, the sheer light and the complete manifestation. All its members are knowers, who are present to one another [and] ‘firmly established in the favour of a Mighty King’ (54:55). He looks at them, and they look at Him with the eyes of their hearts. They are Intimate Angels (*al-malā’ikah al-muqarrabūn*) and those of the perfect, real happiness among people. ‘[They are] those unto whom God hath shown favour, of the Prophets and the Saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!’ (4:69)

There is neither absence nor loss at all, in any regard. It [the intelligible mode] is a unique (*waḥdāniyyah*) mode of being, applicable to everything with a specific quiddity, and all things finally go back into a perfect complete existence without multiplicity or change. Just as our master al-Ṣādiq, Peace be upon him, told about the matter of Imams of the Household (*ahl al-bayt*), Peace be upon them, ‘Our knowledge is one, our superiority (*faḍl*) is one, and we are one thing.’ He said, ‘All of us are one with God.’

As for the imaginal (*mithālī*) mode of being, it also has life, continuation, luminosity, manifestation, and cognition (*idrāk*), but it is below the first [intelligible mode of being] in these judgments (*aḥkām*) and in its [level of] existence (*wujūd*), even if it is independent and free from the matter of body. Likewise, all the objects of cognition [in this mode] are free from bodily matters and subsist on themselves and on the essence of their actor (*dhāt fā’ilihā*).

However, the imaginal mode of being shares with bodies such a common feature that it has extension and quantitative multiplicity; though its multiplicity is not that

which necessarily leads to displacement (*tazāḥum*) in space and time, acceptance of division, or absence of some parts from others like the multiplicity of bodies. It [this mode] is the intermediate between the two modes of being [i.e., intelligible and bodily].

Think of 'Zayd', insofar as an image produced in your mind. All imaginal forms and shapes you cognize and all that you see in dreams, all of them are of the existents of that [the second] mode of being. But its members are divided into two parts. One is that which is created by God, Glory be to Him, by way of origination (*ibdā'*) or perfection (*takmil*) after creation (*takwīn*). They subsist by themselves and continue to exist by the continuation of their Creator (*bāri'*). In one case 'On that day, faces will be radiant, looking toward their Lord' (75:22–23); they are the directive Angels (*al-malā'ikah al-mudabbirūn*) in this bodily world, the happy ones intermediate between men and jinn, who are the members of salvation among ascetics and earnest worshipers (*'ubbād*). 'Those who believe and do good works will there have Gardens underneath which rivers flow and stay forever in them.'¹ In the other case, 'Their faces on that day are in darkness with dust upon them, enveloped in smoke. Those are the unbelievers, the wicked' (80:40–42).

Another [part of the existents in the imaginal mode of being] emerges from our souls with God's permission, through our origination of it in this life and in the hereafter. It subsists by our souls in the same way that the act subsists by the actor. It [this part] continues to exist by the continuation of soul's turning its face to pay attention to it and by its operation of imagination to represent and fix it. When it [soul] turns away from it [imaginal existent, image], this disappears and is gone. This is because God, Glory be to Him, has created and originated the human soul as an image of His own self in essence, attribution and action, with a differentiation between image and reality so that its [soul's] knowledge (*ma'rifah*) may be a ladder to His knowledge. 'He breathed into it of His spirit' (32:19; 15: 29, etc.) He has made its [soul's] essence free from worldly existents (*akwān*), locations (*aḥyāz*) and directions (*jihāt*), and has made it [soul] have life, potency (*qudrah*), knowledge, will, hearing and sight. He has made it [soul] have a kingdom (*mamlakah*), similar to His Kingdom, where He creates what He wishes and chooses what He wills. It [human soul] has in its self its own special world of substances and accidents, either immaterial or material, such as celestial spheres, elements, compounds, and other created beings. However, on account of its weakness, its [ontological] distance from the source of existence by [many] intermediaries, by [its] lowerings of degree (*tanazzulāt*), and by its overwhelming bodily modes, and because of [its] association with matter and its attachments, it [the soul] does not follow from its acts and traces (as long as it is in this mode of being). It is rather what follows from external things. Existences of its traces are therein like shades and shadowy forms

1. Qur'ān 2:25 with slight modifications.

(*ashbāh*) of the external existences, even if quiddity in itself is preserved in the two existences [imaginal and material].

When one has reached through to his freedom from a garment of the mortal, to the world of the sacred or the place of nobility, and his faculty has become perfect; he is certainly able to bring into existence the things which are existent in the external with actual traces, with God's permission, even if he is still in this mode of being. He is furthermore able to preserve them with spiritual endeavor (*himmah*) unless he loses his attention to them. However, they will disappear when inattention falls upon him.

If it is asked how we know that the conceived forms we witness in the faculty of our imagination are not imprinted in any of the bodies in this world, we would answer in the following way; because we are not able to locate them in a sensory way that they are here or there. In other words, because we cannot demonstrate that towering mountains and spacious deserts together with their trees, rivers, hills, lowlands, grand celestial spheres, and stars are contained in a small size and extent, in a certain location in the brain or the spirit therein, on the condition that they may not be the same.¹ Therefore, they are not in this world. They [imaginal forms] are not accidents to their [concrete] subsistence [in this world], and are not in a location though they have dimensions and extensions. They are simple bodies of form without matter. That is because they are neither associated with potency or preparedness, nor susceptible to change and shift by connection [with] and separation [from matter] or things so like [matter] that the confirmation of matter therein might be fully demonstrated. Rather, they are originated all at once, as they are, and are annihilated all at once completely.

In this way when we intend to divide a compound entity in imagination, for example, into two parts, there is no way to this [division] for us except by origination of the two parts. We do not divide that [already existed] body into two. In this way if we intend to make a white body black, then we newly invent a black body similar to it. One can judge other cases by this analogy.

A clear indication of the imaginal mode of being and its independence is dreams and genuine predictions. He who has both [abilities of dreams and prediction], does not bring forth his knowledge of things in his essence, for his essence is in accordance with what will take place [in the external]. His incapability and that of his species to do this is evident. The power of that [to bring forth manifest knowledge] is not in the dreamer's faculties, or in his soul. Otherwise he would be more capable of bringing it forth at awakening.

Thereafter, if he invented for himself his knowledge of what will take place [in the future], he would inevitably know it before he knows to invent it [his knowledge] in conformity with [what will take place]. This is impossible, though man knows necessarily and generally that notification (*i'lām*) is from another being. Most certainly

1. He is referring to 'monism' which holds the view that mind and matter are essentially two aspects of the same substance.

these matters are established in another higher world. As for the sensible mode of being, it is the mode of being of death, passing away, loss, darkness, and ignorance. It [this mode] is composed of matter and form; both of which are liquid and transitory and continue to change, separate, and divide themselves. Neither knowledge (*shu'ūr*) nor awareness (*ish'ār*) is attached to it [the sensible mode of being], except through their following of the other two modes of being. Knowledge becomes manifest to sense through the mediation of accidents (*a'rāḍ*). That is also seen from the viewpoint of the three modes of being in a continuous unity. As for their multiplicity (*kathrah*) of quantity and their partition at the supposing division, every one of their parts is non-existent and lost from one another. The whole is absent and lost from the whole. In this way all that attach themselves to it [the sensible mode of being] are also absent as much as everyone attaches themselves to it. That is because they are of matter and matter is accompanied with non-existence (*'adam*) and darkness, it is a rather dark substance itself. The sensible mode of being is the first of what appears from darkness because it is potential in its self. Through the world of light, in which it has in its origin; it receives luminous forms appropriately. Its darkness is purified by its [received] forms. The forms are its various manifestations. The luminosity of all that is in the sensible mode of being is feeble, and its degree of existence is weak and concealed. Therefore, in order to cognize it [the sensible mode of being], it is necessary to grasp anyone [in the sensible mode of being] as free from matter so that existence becomes free from non-existence. It [existence] becomes manifest absolutely. This mode of being is mixed with darkness and mingled with non-existence. It is the coarsest and weakest of the modes of being. Because of its weakness, it needs the cradle of space and of time. Its members, those suited for it are the wretched of men and jinn and other animals, plants and minerals including both simple and compound beings sensible in this lowest world, whom God neither addresses nor looks at, as is stated in a sacred saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*): 'I [God] have not looked at bodies since I created them.' Even if they are in the intermediate mode of being, together with their bodies, the wretched are not of its [intermediate mode of being] members because they neither long for nor attach themselves to, it, but rather they attach themselves to, depend on and long for, the meanest lowest mode of being, because they are satisfied and tranquil with the life of this world. When they separate themselves from it, they are tortured with its separation. This is different in case of the blessed. Even if they are in the transient mode of being, with their bodies as well, they are not of its members because they neither attach themselves to it nor depend on it, rather they long and yearn for the other mode of being. On account of this they are blessed with the attainment of it and the separation from this lowest [mode of being]. Herefrom it is mentioned in a traditional report: 'This world is the prison of the faithful and the paradise of the unbelievers.'¹

1. *Kāfī*, 2, 251, nos. 6, 7.

The Commander of the Faithful, Peace be upon him, when he was stabbed by one (Ibn Muljam), said, 'I won with the Lord of the Ka'bah.'¹

Concerning the ascetics, he said, 'They are people of the members of this world, but not of its members. They are in it but as if not in it. They carry out in it what people look on, and they hurry in it to do what people are hesitant to do. Their bodies are transformed among the members of the hereafter. They see the members of this world as attaching great importance to the death of their bodies while they attach tremendous importance to the death of the hearts of their living beings.'²

He said, concerning some of them, 'They associate with this world through the bodies of their spirits, which are attached to the highest sphere. Those are God's deputies on His earth and His callers (*du'āt*) to His religion. Ah! how passionate their longing for their encounter is!'³

He said, concerning this world, 'It is a sweet of greens, which encompasses carnal passions and has deep attachment to the ephemeral; it pleases us with worthless things; it melts away with false expectations: it is adorned with deception. Its pleasure does not last long, and no one is safe from its greed. It is deceptive and destructive: it is changeable and transitory; it is passing and perishing: it is voracious and annihilating. When it reaches the desire of those who are content with and long for it, it does not fail to become just as He, the Most High, mentioned in the following way: '[The life of the world is] as water which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingleth with it and then becometh dry twigs that the winds scatter' (18:45).

He said concerning it [the world], 'It is the closest abode to God's anger and the most distant from God's delight.'⁴

Faṣl

These three modes of being correspond to the order of emanation (*ṣudūr*). It is in this sense that every existent in this lowest mode of being, both substances and accidents, even including motion, rest, organizations, flavour, and smell, have a form in the intermediate mode of being which is prior to it in existence, and also a reality in the highest mode of being which is prior to both of them. However, all the essences, organizations, relations, and orders, both bodily and psychic, that are in this lowest world are shadows, traces, and representations of the spiritual essences, the intelligible organizations, and the ideal relations that are in the highest world. They have descended, become opaque, and materialized themselves after they were pure, limpid, and so sacred that no defect or shame could reach them, free from turbidity and rust, transcendent over impairment and deficiency, and far

1. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-shī'ah* (Beirut, 1986), 1, 531.

2. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Khuṭbah, no. 230.

3. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Qiṣār, no. 147.

4. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Khuṭbah, no. 161.

from perdition and extinction. Every one of the three modes has different ordered layers in the intelligible and the imaginal worlds.

In this manner, between the intelligible fire and the lowest fire are several layered fires. Because of this, it is mentioned in a traditional report (*ḥadīth*) that, 'This fire [intellect] was cleansed seventy times in water and was brought down'. It [this saying] alludes to the descent of its degree from the perfect state of the reality of fire through the weakening of its effect, and into the diminution of its substance according to every descent.

Therefore, one of the theosophers said, 'These senses are weak intellects while those intellects are powerful senses.'

The difference of layers is alluded to by our master al-Bāqir, Peace be upon him, when he says, 'God created Muḥammad and the Household of Muḥammad with the soil of *'Ilīyyūn*¹ and created their hearts with the soil above this, and He created our party (*shī'a*) with the soil below *'Ilīyyūn* and created their hearts with the soil of *'Ilīyyūn*. Therefore, the hearts of our party are of the bodies of the Household of Muḥammad. On the other hand, God created the enemy of Muḥammad with the soil of *Sijjīn*² and created their hearts with the soil coarser than that, and He created their party with the soil below *Sijjīn* and created their hearts with the soil of *Sijjīn*. Their hearts are of the bodies of those, and every heart craves for its body.'³

1. The word is explained as a place in the seventh heaven beneath the Divine Throne or a register of the good actions of believers. See Qur'ān 83:18f.

2. The word is explained as a place of the seventh lowest earth where Iblis and his evil soldiers live, or a register of wicked actions of unbelievers. See Qur'ān 83:7f.

3. The report is not found in Kulaynī, but similar reports are found in Kulaynī, vol. 1, pp. 389f. and Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār* (Beirut, 1983), vol. 64, p.126.

Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī

Muḥammad Saʿīd ibn Muḥammad, known as Qāḍī Saʿīd Qummī (The Judge from Qom) and *Ḥakīm Kūchak* (Little Sage) was born in 1043/1633 in the city of Qom and died there in 1103/1691. As his title suggests, he was also a judge in the city of Qom, though he migrated to Isfahan during the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I.

Little is known about the details of his life, but it appears that he came from a family of scholars: his brother Muḥammad Ḥusayn was also a student of Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī and a distinguished scholar who wrote a full commentary on the Qurʾān. Among his teachers were some of the most illustrious and eminent scholars, philosophers, theologians and masters of traditional sciences, including Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, both students and sons in-law of Mullā Ṣadrā, who gave the latter the titles Fayḍ (Effusion) and Fayyāḍ (the Bestower of Effusion). It was with ʿAbd al-Razzāq Lāhijī that Qāḍī Saʿīd studied the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī. Among his other teachers was Mullā Rajab ʿAlī Tabrīzī, the influential Peripatetic philosopher belonging to the School of Isfahan who was an intellectual adversary of Mullā Ṣadrā. Tabrīzī remained opposed to Mullā Ṣadrā with regard to some of the salient features of the latter's transcendent philosophy such as the principiality of being and its primacy over the principiality of quiddity. Mullā Ṣadrā emphasized the synonymy of being, while Tabrīzī maintained its homonymy. Traces of Tabrīzī's influence can be seen in the teachings of Qāḍī Saʿīd. One should also mention that Qāḍī Saʿīd was well versed in the doctrines of *ʿirfān*.

Based on his prolific and extensive writings in different fields of Islamic scholarship, Qāḍī Saʿīd must have mastered both the religious and discursive sciences of his time. His writings include works in Qurʾānic exegesis, prophetic traditions, commentaries of and glosses on different philosophical works and treatises on the treatment of different philosophical topics and gnostic themes such as hermeneutic and esoteric interpretations (*taʾwīl*) of such acts of worship as prayers and pilgrimage. His publications include *Kilīd-i bihisht* (The Key to Paradise), written in Persian, concerning Divine Names and Attributes, as well as an elaboration

of Mullā Rajab ‘Alī’s views on existence and a partial commentary on the Arabic translation of Plotinus’ *Enneads* known in Arabic as *Uthūlūjīyā* (also known as *Kitāb al-Rubūbiyyah*). Among his other notable works we can mention: *al-Arba‘ūn ḥadithān* (Forty Prophetic Traditions), *Arba‘īniyyāt* (Forty Treatises), *Fawā‘id al-raḍawiyyah* (Benefits of Contentment). He also wrote *Mirqāt al-asrār* (Ascension of Secrets) on the relationship between the created and the uncreated order and the problem of how the world came into being. Moreover, he completed a commentary on Shaykh Ṣadūq’s *al-Tawḥīd* (Unity).

One of the most important works of Qāḍī Sa‘īd is *Asrār al-‘ibādāt wa ḥaqīqat al-ṣalāt* (Mysteries of Worship and the Reality of Prayer) from which the first section below is drawn. As the title suggests, this treatise is a philosophico-gnostic interpretation of Islamic rites including the daily prayers. Qāḍī Sa‘īd goes through various acts of canonical prayer and systematically offers a spiritual hermeneutics (*ta’wīl*) of such topics as the notion of ‘the increments in prayer’. He writes of the prayer corresponding to the spiritual rank of our Lady Fāṭimah, (the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad), purification and the purifier (*ṭahūr*) and the cleansing of the soul from spiritual illness. This book also includes one of the most profound commentaries upon the symbolism of the Ka‘bah, of sacred space and sacred geometry. It has been amply treated by Henry Corbin in his *Temple et Contemplation* and so is not included here.

The second section features one of the most interesting texts, mostly unknown to the Western audience until recently: *Ta’līqāt bar uthūlūjīyā* (Commentary on the *Enneads*). Few Greek books have been more influential on the Islamic philosophical tradition in general and later Islamic philosophy in particular than the *Enneads*. This commentary represents the height of Shi‘i-gnostic interpretation of Greek thought. Qāḍī Sa‘īd writes that Aristotle (or in reality Plotinus) has said about this book that ‘its reported statements are similar to a ladder leading up to the required station, so that whoever is seeking it, must acquire a second nature’.

The selection included here focuses on the First Principle, knowledge and its hierarchy, and the ascending and descending of the soul. Qāḍī Sa‘īd writes that the symbols used in this book ‘are derived from those sciences which have emanated from the lights of the prophets and the saints, as will appear to those who are rooted in the “science of hours of revelation” and of the final message. Therefore, it is not enough therein to follow the path of contemplation, but it is essential that the seeker should train his soul, by recourse to religious and spiritual disciplines.’

M. Aminrazavi

MYSTERIES OF WORSHIP

Asrār al-‘ibādāt

Translated for this volume by Gholam-Reza Aavani from Qāḍī Sa‘īd Qummī, *Asrār al-‘ibādāt*, ed. M. B. Sabzawārī (Tehran, 1339 Sh./1960), pp. 6–28.

Prayer (*ṣalāt*) etymologically means mercy and supplication (*du‘ā’*). Sometimes it (*ṣalāt*) is attributed to God in which case it means bestowing mercy; it is also attributed to the angels wherein it means seeking mercy and forgiveness for believers. God says: ‘He it is who prays for you and his angels’ (33:43). Again God, glorified be His Name, says: ‘and they ask forgiveness for those who believe...’ (40:7) When *ṣalā* is attributed to believers, it signifies mercy, supplication, as well as the ritual and canonical deeds specified in the Divine Law. It is predicated of every thing other than God, including all creatures, such as angels, human beings, animals, plants, and minerals in accord with [according to] what has been prescribed and determined for them. God, how majestic are His words, says: ‘Do you not see that those who are in the heavens and on earth and the birds arrayed in the sky all glorify God? Each one of them knows its own prayer and its own glorification’ (24:41). The word ‘glorify’ in this verse designates a more general meaning than the specific prayers and glorification, because glorification (*tasbiḥ*) in Arabic is used in the sense of prayers.

Then know that this word (*ṣalāt*) is derived also from *taṣliyah* which means straightening a crooked wood by fire. This might be because he who prays, in concentrating his attention towards God, and in intending him, might be inclined to vainglory and his vision might be distorted to one other than Him. This gaze toward the other is the result of the fervour which he gains through the upward ascension and it is due to the proximity to the spiritual sun of the real.

Or it [*taṣliyah*] might have the grammatical form of a certain kind of *tafīl*, which signifies negation in certain verbs, even though this form is rare. So it means putting out the fire, as in the following *ḥadīth* (tradition) by the Prophet: ‘Hasten to the fires which you have kindled on your backs and extinguish them by your prayers.’ That is, the fires which you ignited through the attention and motion of your hearts toward things other than God and through bearing the burden of sins causing fire, when you reckoned that they are really in possession of benefits and harms, and are the cause of good and evil, and you wrongly thought that they would straighten your crookedness and set in order your unequal balance. The expression ‘backs’ refers to everything other than God because ‘wheresoever you turn, there you see the *face* of God’ (2:115). So put out the fire which was kindled on your backs and consumed your hearts, by the coolness of certainty [certitude]

and shower down the rain of Divine Mercy by performing the prayers of the meek. Then if you desire your own rectification, set right your crooked backs by setting in order the pillars of your prayers and by rectifying it, rectify yourself.

It [*ṣalāt*] may be derived from the root *muṣallī* as in a horse-race, in which it is the horse next to the winning horse on the racecourse. Among the pillars of Islam, *ṣalāt* ranks the second, as it is reported that Islam is based on five pillars: the testimony that there is no god save Allah, the prayer, the giving of alms, fasting, and pilgrimage; and also because the worshipper ranks the second according to the aforementioned *ḥadīth* in which God reports, 'I have divided the prayers between Me and my servant.'

And in *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, by Ibn Tā'ūs, it is narrated that one, by name Razzām, the servant of Khālīd ibn 'Abd Allāh, one of the damned, asked Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, may the peace of God be upon both, in the presence of the Caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr a question concerning the prayer and its ritual conditions. Ja'far ibn Muḥammad answered that the prayer has four thousand conditions, even one of which should not be missing. Razzām said, 'tell me about those things which we are not permitted to forswear and which are necessary for the completion of the prayer.' Whereupon he, upon whom be the peace of God, said, 'True prayer cannot be accomplished, except by perfect purification and far-reaching wholeness, without being provoked by the devil, nor fixing one's gaze to the other, in which act the worshipper, possessing knowledge, is humble, meek, and steadfast and he stands before God in a state of despair and hope, forbearance and anxiety, as if the Divine promises were addressed to him and the threats of punishment befell him alone. He will sacrifice all worldly contingencies, stand upright before the object of his desire, and spare no effort in the way of God; making himself swerve from everything which inclines him towards the earth, without being touched by dust. He cuts off all bonds of interest, except those binding him to Him who is his destination, to whom he is delegated, and to whom he appeals for help. When he does all these things he has truly performed his prayer, one which prohibits him from evil and forbidden things.' Whereupon Manṣūr the Caliph turned towards Abū 'Abd Allāh (Ja'far ibn Muḥammad), upon whom be the peace of God, and said, 'O Abū 'Abd Allāh, as usual we have ladled out from your vast ocean; you are the cause of our boastfulness. Your penetrating insights make our blind eyes see. Your light disperses the cloud of darkness. Verily we swim in the glory and splendour of your sanctity and in the overflow of your ocean.'

I say that in the above tradition, 'perfect purification' is one in which the ablution is duly lengthened, or it is one in which the washing is repeated twice, or one in which water is brought fully to the respective limbs; or it is one in which the manner of washing and wiping is according to that prescribed by the People of the Household. This interpretation is extrinsic, but we shall explain its esoteric signification later.

‘The far-reaching wholeness’ is outwardly both maturity and being devoid of all impediments; inwardly, it is belief in the imamate of ‘Alī and his children, upon whom be the peace of God, and to be initiated into the host of their friends. As to ‘wholeness’, reference is made to the words of the Almighty: ‘Today I have perfected for you, your religion and made complete for you my boons’ (5:3). As to its being far-reaching, it is because of the saying of the Almighty, ‘O ye the Messenger, preach far and wide what has been revealed to thee’ (5:67). Another extrinsic meaning of perfect purification is to eschew, in an absolute sense, any kind of association with God and following the foes and enemies of the imams of the folk of truth.

Chapter: Concerning the Increments in Prayer

The reason for the increments in prayer is that originally the prayer demands evenness due to the tradition in which God has divided the prayer between Himself and the worshipper, so the least of the prayers is two units (*rakʿah*), because [two] is the first among the even numbers. So, by performing two bows (genuflexions), the lord is distinguished from the servant, as in the morning prayer, because it is the time when the spiritual and the invisible light [of being] dawns upon the contingent quiddities, which are double in nature. It is evident that two things, when they are united, become one single entity. Hence the two bows make one single prayer; so if one bow is added, this itself signifies that the two divisible bows constitute one single thing. Then, of the two mentioned bows, one encompasses the other in every respect without the other encompassing the first, because the latter implies the former only in certain respects; due to the fact that it is an effect and hence a proof of the former, as is evident. So the plenitude of the first and the poverty of the second demand the increment of a third bow, as in the sunset prayer, to which it is peculiar because it is a time when the light sets in the horizon of contingency.

But if the third one contemplates the first and the second, considering that the first one encompasses the second in all aspects but the second implies the first only in certain aspects, a fourth bow comes into being, as in the noon, afternoon prayers, and in the evening prayer. And this number has been allotted to them because both vision and contemplation are at the extreme limit of perfection and also because their apportioned time is at utmost completion due to the manifestation of light in its entirety in the first two cases and the appearance of the darkness of contingency at its utmost in the last case.

But if the first one is considered, when the second is annihilated in it in all respects and subsists by the first, to be considered to be self-subsistent by itself, then one bow is enough; which we clearly see in some prayers. One bow, moreover, has been allotted to some prayer, when its apportioned time is close to the rise of the sunlight which itself betokens the First One.

Corollary

I say that the evening prayer corresponds to the spiritual rank of our Lady Fatimah, (the daughter of the Prophet) upon whom be the peace of God. This spiritual rank demands oddness and singularity because production and generation can only come about from oddness, and the number three is the first among odd numbers. For this reason the increment in this prayer should be one. And because the rank of hiddenness and veiledness belongs to women, so that the aspect of unity of the First One, hidden from human minds and sights, prevails upon her. As to the four-bow prayers, they are specific to the spiritual rank of the Prophet, the Saint, and the two grandsons [of the Prophet]. There is no doubt that the rank of men comprehends the two ranks of the hidden and the manifest [visible and the invisible]. Thus an increment of two bows befits these prayers.

Then, know that these prescribed prayers are obligatory to them that are obligated to maturity and purification, on conditions of puberty, as implied in the saying of the Imam: 'true prayer is not complete without perfect purification and far-reaching wholeness.' The latter part of the tradition is a clear reference to [the two conditions of] puberty and intellectual maturity from among the three conditions. This is because perfect maturity is not possible without the existence of the rational faculty; otherwise it would not avail. But [if we want to consider these three conditions] from an esoteric point of view, a mature man, who has come of age, is one who has attained perfection in knowledge and in spiritual exertions to the extent that he is able to intelligize all the commands and prohibitions direct from God, and all that God inspires into his inmost being. In addition, he is able to distinguish between the incidents of the heart, whether they come from God or from the carnal soul. Again he is able to sift out the angelic touch from the satanic touch. When he has reached into knowledge and discrimination to this extent and reasons out, through God, things willed of him by God, and fully understands the sacred tradition, '... the heart of my believing servant encompasses me...', it then becomes incumbent on him to purify his heart from every thing which impedes him from having intimate communion with his Lord. In short, he should utilize this purification in his heart, in all his interior, and the exterior organs, according to the limits prescribed by the Divine Law. Now we shall elaborate this point in several chapters.

Chapter: Concerning Purification

Lexically, purification (*al-ṭahārah*) means cleanliness (*al-niẓāfah*); and it is either the purification of the exterior or that of the interior. The second is either the purification of the soul (*naḥs*), intellect (*'aql*), or one's innermost self (*sirr*). The purification of the senses or the limbs is due to their efficaciousness in the permissibility of the worship in general purification, moreover it [purification of

the senses and limbs] is not liable to increase or decrease. Purification might be due to other reasons too.

The spiritual purification of the soul consists of emptying it of petty, contemptible traits and reprehensible characteristics, and in embellishing it with praiseworthy qualities and virtues. The purification of the intellect consists of cleansing it of the filth of misleading opinions and the squalor of doubts and erroneous views. The purification of the inmost self (*sirr*) consists of withholding it [the inmost self] from viewing or contemplating other than Him and from attributing anything to anybody save Him.

As to external purification, it consists of cleaning oneself from dirty things abhorrent to human nature and human eyes, those which human ears find filthy and horrendous. The organs of the body should be absolutely cleansed of canonically impure things. There are three permissible ways to purify the limbs: ablution (*wuḍū'*), washing the whole body (*ghusl*), and cleaning by earth or sand (*tayammum*).

Ablution, symbolically speaking, is an allusion to spiritual ranks and Divine manifestations which, God willing, you will come to know shortly. The reason for washing the whole body (*ghusl*) is to be cleansed from [the sin] of the all-embracing annihilation experienced by one who has had sexual intercourse due to the carnal pleasure which pervaded his whole body, wherein he was self-conscious of his self-subsistent being. As this state did not come about intrinsically through him, he washes that state off and he is garbed again in the attire of existence by his Lord, by ritual water which is the principle of life, existence, and knowledge. By sexual intercourse, the servant becomes temporarily remote from the peak of proximity and friendship due to the self-assertion of his ego. So sexual intercourse, is as it were, an estrangement from the state of servanthood, an intrusion into the precincts of Lordship, and a dissimulation of sovereignty. So he confesses to his shortcomings by purifying himself through washing his entire body.

As for cleaning by earth or sand, it is in response to the occurrence of presumptuousness in the servant when he self-conceitedly sees all power emanating from himself, whereby he is deprived of the special mercy of God toward his honoured servants. So he has not attained the knowledge, which is the life of the heart, that which enables him to mortify his self-conceit. Due to some shortcomings in his primordial nature, his speculative faculty is not yet able to acquire the direct intuitive knowledge imparted by God. Lacking such knowledge, he is afraid of slipping into atheism. Hence it behoves him to speculate about his primordial origin until he realizes his essential nothingness. By such contemplation of his own self, he comes to purify it and thereby he comes to know his creator.

Chapter: Concerning the Purifier (*ṭahūr*)

It is either ritually pure water which is the secret of life, which itself symbolizes the science of the contemplation upon the Living, the self-subsistent Divinity—God the Almighty says: ‘We sent down from Heaven a water by which we imparted life to everything’ (31:10); He, may He be exalted, also says: ‘It is He who sends down for you, from Heaven, a water by which He purifies you and removes from you the filth of Satan’ (8:12);—or again, the purifying substance is the earth which is the origin of human existence. He, may His Name be glorified, says, ‘and out of it we created you’. Again, He, may His majesty be exalted, says: ‘if you do not find water, then have recourse to wholesome dust and wipe your faces and your hands’ (4:43). When you clean yourself by dust, you should ponder over yourself to see who created you, whence He created you, and wherefore He created you; so humble yourself before Him and remove all sorts of arrogance from your head, because earth originally symbolizes poverty and indigence.

Then know that rainwater is utmost in purity because it has one single mixture and nothing extraneous has mingled with it. So, inwardly it signifies the direct and contemplative knowledge imparted by God to His servant, which has but one single savour. All the prophets and saints were unanimous in their words, and all drank from the same unpolluted water, even if their drinking-places were different. So in your external and internal purification you should rely on this water.

As to the water springing from fountains and wells, it is multifarious in taste, subject to the area and zone whence it issued forth and intermingled with the soil. It symbolizes knowledge acquired through right ratiocination, which is not devoid of the blemish of change, depending on the temperament of the thinker, who takes into consideration the sensible data that constitutes the matter of his apodictic demonstrations. So make your choice of which of the two waters is nearer to your taste and more befits your drinking habits.

Chapter: Concerning Evacuation

Since God has called forth His servant to His proximity in prayer and, in his confidential intimations with Him, it behoves him to remove from himself everything hurtful and filthy which banishes him from his Lord. For example he should evacuate his entrails from residues of waste food and drink, which are the filth of Satan and have no benefit in the virtuous city of the human being. They are the cause of all manners of temptations and ailments and they are the origin of all kinds of pains and illnesses in our bodily temple. The locus of excretion is washed off until no trace is left thereof, either by water, which is the principle of life while the locus is lifeless and remote from the subjugation of the spirit, or else the cleansing can be done by pebbles, inasmuch as pebbles can be used to ward

off what we want to remove. By this purification he is enabled to remove from his consideration the vision of causes and effects, which benefit can again be observed in ablution. So this exterior purification becomes a token for the purification of the heart from all impurities, for the disavowing of the self and the withdrawal from people. He should evacuate his mansion for the descent of the King of proximity, for such a descent is without comparison.

Also know that the privy parts are the places of concealment and chastity, as they are the organs for excreting the harmful things issuing from the belly. They are inclined to the temptations of the carnal soul, especially with regard to those things which deprecate and vilify religion, root and branch. So while you are cleansing your genitals from outward impurities by ritually clean water or by pebbles, rid your interior self of evil thoughts and misleading doubts. Do this by the water of the science of unification (*tawhīd*), by a veritable faith in His Messengers, and by submission to those who are in command, by way of a veritable demonstrative and intellectual science from God, by which you can discern the aspect of truth in every doubt, and the exit from every dilemma; do this if you can utilize such knowledge, otherwise you should adhere to the community and follow the masters of science and wisdom, because *jamrah* (pebble) in Arabic also means ‘the community’. The reason for the oddness (*watṛiyyah*) is that God is singular and He loves the singular, and He wants to make the odd and the singular visible for every wayfarer, [pointing] towards Him in every thing and at every state.

Chapter: Concerning Ablution

Know that there is no ruling in the Divine Law with respect to the exterior (*zāhir*) without having an intrinsic relationship to the interior (*bāṭin*). So, ye my brother, be among those who worship God outwardly and inwardly according to what has been decreed by the Divine Law, so that you may be among the folk of nobility. Do not be among those who pay only lip-service to God in their worship. When you are able to use water in your ablution, be cognizant that you are, in God’s view, in such a rank that He has permitted you to receive His mercy and His grace. He has decreed that you should gain the true knowledge necessary for the cognition of Him and the intended objects of His laws. He has opened for you a gate to the heaven of His proximity and intimation, through the water which He has sent down to purify His servants and to save them from everything which causes remoteness from Him and from His vicinity. Again He has enabled you to purify your exterior by the water that is the life of the bodies and to cleanse your interior by knowledge, which is the principle of life in human spirits. So the first thing you should do is wash your two hands before you immerse them in the vessel in order to receive that mercy and knowledge, and to purge them of all blemishes; you should especially purge yourself of your own power and strength. When you are washing your left hand you

should remind yourself that there can be no power against the sins except through God, and when washing the right hand you should remember that there can be no strength for worship save by God. The two hands are the organs for seizing and grasping which betoken stinginess, covetousness, and avarice. One should purify them by generosity, self-sacrifice, and munificence. Again, one should purify them of things which are forbidden in the Divine Law, such as extortion, theft, and so on; or of things which it is better to abandon, such as the world and the purely mundane things.

Your sleep at night is your negligence from your hidden and invisible reality, while your sleep during the day is your absence from your visible reality. By the washing off, the realization of the two worlds is acquired, and you will see in yourself both this world and the next; then by washing your hands, you will dismiss and abandon both in order to turn your attention to the creator of both worlds. Then, when you sip water and turn it around in your mouth, and invoke the beautiful Names, ugly words are removed from your tongue. Then by reciting verses of the Holy Book and by invoking the supreme Name, you are purged of polytheism, untruth, falsehood, and everything which God has forbidden to talk about.

Then by sniffing water into your nostrils, you fall down from the rank of glory and majesty peculiar to God and act according to the rules of servanthood until you become apt to smell the perfume of proximity with God, the bestower of all blessings, and until you find the Breath of the Compassionate from Yemen.

Then wash your face with the water of shamefacedness before God, lest He should see you where He has forbidden you, lest you turn your face to those other than your master, or lest you hope for your object of desire from someone else. Wash your hands from the elbows of the vision of causes which are nothing but the hands of craftsmanship all the way to the fingertips of direct agency and acquisition. Then rub your head ritually, by discarding the love of worldly positions with which it is filled, because your head is the highest part in your body, there you find all your intellectual powers. Then you show meekness, humility, and self-abasement and you wipe off the dirt of haughtiness, arrogance, and self-aggrandizement. God the Almighty says: 'The Last Abode we have made for those who do not desire supremacy on earth nor corruption.' In cleaning by dust the ritual rubbing of the head is not decreed in the Divine Law because putting earth on one's head is a sign of separation, whereas the intended aim of prayer is union and reconciliation. Then ritually rub your feet by frequenting much the mosques, by persevering in the lesser holy war and in the greater holy war, clean them of the self-conceited gait, beware lest you use them in bearing slander; 'and be modest in thy walk.' Then your ablution is complete. This is the gist of what they have said concerning ablution, and indeed they have done their utmost in what they have said.

Conclusion

And I say in this regard that there are authentic reports of the holy Imams, that when Adam, upon whom be the peace of God, walked towards the tree, turned his face toward it, ate of its fruits, placed it over his head coveting eternal life, and exceeded the bounds of glorifying it, so our community, which is the best of all communities, was bidden to purify those places by means of ritual rubbing or ritual washing so as to purge themselves of the original sin of their forefather.

I say, the secret of secrets in the above tradition as I understand it, is that the universal soul, is like an affectionate father toward all individual souls. It [the universal soul] comprehends them all and its intelligible comprehensiveness is not like that of the whole with respect to parts or that of the universal in respect of particulars, but a sort of comprehension which is beyond the grasp of the senses and imagination. When she found in herself the perfections entrusted to her from her creator, she beheld her own essence and her infinite beauty, splendour, and perfection and that she was the bearer of the great Divine trust of vicegerency and those precious gems deposited in her, she grew haughty and supercilious, whereas those perfections demanded manifestation and being made known, so that the traces of those perfections might see the light of the day. So this [spiritual] egocentricity and that intrinsic demand prompted her to manifest herself, so she turned her face toward this world of falsehood to make manifest what of those precious gems of the luminous world was deposited in her, coveting that they would last for her forever and she would become the eternal sovereign of the dominion; so she betrayed the trust and claimed for herself what was deposited in her. So she turned to matter, and no doubt turning to something is by one's face. By her hands of acquisition, she wrought certain actions and works of craftsmanship in matter. She made matter the locus of her manifestation and the temple of her beauty and joy. So she submitted herself to matter and worked in it according to the latter's natural disposition. She worked her craftsmanship as she was commanded, according to the receptivity of the receptacles; so she trod the path to the land of exile, after she had been in her fatherland of glory, majesty, and splendour; so she became impressed in matter so that she could not contemplate her own essence or envision what was in it. When she saw her nakedness and that she had nothing of the garments of paradise to garb herself, she was filled with remorse and regret because of the extravagance she had done against God. So those intelligible truths, which she had hold of and which belonged to her dominion, fell from her hands and scattered in all parts of that matter and hence came into being the substances of minerals, vegetative, and animal kingdoms.

COMMENTARY ON THE ENNEADS

Ta'liqāt bar uthūlūjiyā

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī, 'Ta'liqāt bar uthūlūjiyā', in S. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, ed., *Muntakhabāt-i az āthār-i ḥukamā-yi ilāhī-yi Īrān* (Tehran, 1378 Sh./1999), pp. 149–169.

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

First Chapter

We praise you, Concealer of souls, enrich us; and we thank you, Creator of reasons and Maker of sensible entities, so save us, that we might sing your praise often in the fold of sanctity, together with our sacred forefathers. We remember you much, together with the noble company of our heavenly brethren. You have been watchful of us as our sincere parents, and carefully observant of our conditions. We also pray for one whose mark of glory is universal reason, who has the universal, divine soul as one of his faculties, for Muḥammad, hearer of the standard of praise and the worthy station, he who occupies the rank of unity and bounteous basin, together with his kin, who are the custodians of the wisdom of God, the worshipped King, as well as all the revered prophets and apostles and the rest of the saints and the pious.

To proceed, the bearer of the name Sa'īd, of limited financial assets, and a seeker of guidance from Prophet Muḥammad, may God accord him a happy life, and his kin, declares that these are notes I have dared to put together in commenting on the treatise bequeathed by the master of wisdom and founder of the canons of the philosophers, Aristotle the Great,¹ of whom reliable scholars have reported that our Prophet, the master of all messengers, said: 'He was a prophet whose people have ignored [him].'

It is also reported that when the Prophet was asked about Aristotle, he said: 'Had he attained me, he could have learned from me, and what is learned from him is the summit of his knowledge.' That is, in short, the status of the great philosopher who occupies this noble rank; and this book is the object of investigation by people of understanding. However, many scholars have shown their inability to grasp its intent, while others have confessed their failure to attain its benefits, so much so that the Great Master² has said: 'I read this book from beginning to end seventy times before I could grasp its intent.' If this is the case, what then is the plight of

1. The *Uthūlūjiyā* is based on Plotinus' *Enneads*, but was mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle in the Arabic sources. The Arabic text we are translating is not always reliable and thus we have resorted to numerous corrections.

2. Unknown, unless Ibn Sinā, who also commented on the *Uthūlūjiyā*, is intended.

one who has no capital in the market of knowledge, especially when the master of the foundation of Islam, despite his nobility and vast learning, despite having dived into this torrent and having swum in the vast ocean in search of that pearl, ended up, as we will quote his words later, God willing, by extracting marbles with which children play, those worthy of the neck-bonds of animals, to such an extent that his admirers were led to repudiate his words, due to his noble stature and the extent of his favour? My own favoured opinion is that this book cannot be grasped in terms of formal wisdom, as Aristotle the Great has said: 'its reported statements are similar to a ladder leading up to the required station, so that whoever is seeking it, must acquire a second nature.' For, the symbols of this book are derived from those sciences which have emanated from the lights of the prophets and the saints, as will appear to those who are rooted in the science of hours of revelation and of the final message. Therefore, it is not enough therein to follow the path of contemplation, but it is essential that the seeker should train his soul, by recourse to religious exercises and by following the lead of the people of the house of infallibility.

It has also been well said that whoever has the slightest acquaintance with his noble sciences cannot doubt that the principles of its quests are derived from the prophets, (may God bless them all); and must judge in an unequivocal manner that the human faculties are not able to grasp those hidden truths, or unravel the secrets of those subtleties on their own. Instead, all that is derived is derived from the luminaries of people of observation and spiritual lights. Plato the Divine, teacher of the First Master,¹ has said: 'The knowledge of thousands of questions has been revealed to me with certainty, of which I have no proof.' It is clear that that revelation derived from the source of sainthood: spiritual disclosure and the shunning of the corporal frame. I have indeed, despite my limited trade both in the market of knowledge and in practice, adopted this course, seeking refuge in the doorway of science and knowledge, putting my trust in God, Lord of grace and Giver of wisdom. From Him we seek assistance and in Him we trust.

1. The (author) says: 'It behoves every seeker...' This means that every determined seeker of knowledge should attempt the clarification of three of the following topics:

The first consists in the knowledge of the purpose; that is, the goal of its seeker or the one who intends it in that search or endeavour, due to his need to require it. For if need did not call for seeking the goal of conceived advantage, the seeking will not arise (thus the letter *f* in his statement 'for the sake of knowledge does not relate to the seeker, as might come to mind, but rather in the sense of 'firm').

The second consists in estimating the measure of advantage, in point of paucity, multiplicity, or baseness. In that case, his search, his weakness in following the required good, or his seeking of the object which he intended in a manner emanating

1. Aristotle.

from the soul for the purpose of subjecting the methods of the relevant premises, which aim at the heart of certainty: However, 'subjecting' is more appropriate. He has also described certainty as that which removes doubt in a revealing manner, because certainty is that which is not removed by the doubts of the sceptics, but certainty is rather what removes doubt once its intended goods and aims are attained by means of certainties.

2. Then he says: 'If submission to his conduct is not achieved...' Here the indefinite mood refers to ignorance, whereas his conduct refers to obedience and the definite 'it' is the subject of his conduct. This is the third condition, which consists in the persistence of obedience to one whose conduct the subject appreciates: By this, I mean the teacher who imparts it when the subject attains the degree of satisfaction by means of rising to the level of exercising the theoretical noble sciences and learned practices; that is, those which uplift the seeker and raise him to the summit of nobility, which consists of the knowledge of the True One with respect to His divinity and lordship. This is, through the essence, attributes and deeds which are sought and intended by the rational souls which have reached the rank of active reason, by means of natural inclination or the instinctive and natural desire, ingrained in their natures, for that noble goal which consists in the knowledge of the beginning and resurrection of rational souls.

3. Then he says: 'The Philosopher has said...' These are the words of the first Teacher of Wisdom¹ and what the translator has mentioned is a prelude to that wise statement in the first part of his book in two symbolic forms. The first is that the goal is the perfect man and that knowledge of the self is identical with knowledge of God. The first statement means that the first stage is desire and the end of the endeavour is the object of that desire and that for which everything is sought. This means that the first intention is attained in thought and comes to pass at the end. This is analogous to saying that, as we mentioned, the goal in creating the world is knowledge, which is fulfilled at the top of the order of being, which is man, and the top of the order of that species is the perfect man, nothing more perfect than whom exists. This is similar to what the people of Truth assert, to the effect that the good intended to create every member of mankind as our prophet, master of all messengers and, although he is first in the order of rational beings, he is the last in the order of cosmic existence, which follows all the ranks of prophecy and succession, as has been said: 'The first thought culminates in the last action.' (So listen!)

The second statement is that the first degree attained is the last degree desired. This means that what exists at first is what is intended at last and is therefore the finest and last, just as we say that the intellect is the finest creation, although it is what being achieved at the end, whereupon it becomes an intellect in actuality; thus

1. Aristotle.

attaining its original essence. This is similar to what the people of Truth assert to the effect that the first light is that of our Prophet, the last of the messengers, and then the fate of everybody on the day of resurrection consists in being under his concern, since he is the witness of all and bears the interest of all. This is similar to saying, as reported: 'We are the last and the first in seeking God and His company, and are therefore the first in the order of being.'

This is what occurs to me in eliciting the sense of this saying. Ya'qūb Ibn Mūsā, the physician has said in interpreting both statements:

The end of creation was the beginning of our knowledge,
And the end of our knowledge, was the beginning of creation.

4. Then he says: 'This what we have attained...' meaning what we have attained of the physical and metaphysical sciences at the beginning of this study, such as the knowledge of divinity contained in this book, is in fact the last stage in the order of physical and metaphysical enquiries. For the goal of the physicist is to conclude all his enquiries by positing an Unmoved Mover, with nothing existing beyond it, whereas the ultimate goal of the metaphysical philosopher is to attain the cause of all things which have no cause.

The author then proceeded to show that, as the physical and metaphysical indications show that the goal of every inquiry or search is the discovery of truth, as a pointer to every action or pursuit. It follows that it is necessary to contemplate that goal and the attributes of perfection belonging to it, which attributes are similar to accidents, as well as its actions which are the active causes.

What he says next to the effect that it is necessary then to examine them, is the sequel to his words: 'Since they are...' As for his words, 'Exhausting the search in speculation results in knowledge...' they prove the durability of seeking and doing in achieving their end, or else seeking would cease when it does not lead to a terminal point. This means that the goal of an exhaustive search is knowledge, and that all the students of physical and metaphysical science are moved by the natural urge ingrained in their souls as an actual urge, and that everything moves and is directed by the desire for the permanent and perfect Truth, who is above perfection. Being above permanence and perfection, He moves everything by means of perfection and completeness, as Mawlawī says in his *Mathnawī*:

The restlessness of the lovers' desire
is from the yearning of attaining thy heart.

5. Then he says: '*Maymar*¹ in the prefaces of the sciences is an introduction...'

1. *Maymar* is a Syriac term which means chapter or section, as used in the Arabic translation of *Uthūlūjiyā*.

However, al-Sayyid Dāmād, may God grant him His favour, says: ‘*Maymar* derives either from *mu’amarah* meaning consultation; or *amarah* in the sense of time and sign, or appointment; or from *al-amirah* in the sense of growth, increase or blessing; or in the sense of a small banner, such as bearers carry in the desert, consisting of stones or the like.’¹

6. Then he says: ‘Through convincing rules...’ Convincing here does not mean that which is understood in the art of oratory, insofar as it excludes necessity. What is meant here is the prods necessitating the assent of the soul and a trust in them, insofar as their premises are necessary, compelling the soul’s seeking the truth and pursuing the path of certainty so as to concur in it.

7. Then he says: ‘Pertaining to causes...’, which may mean that to which the question ‘why?’ may apply. For the response to ‘why?’ is either a matter of action or purpose; everything which has a maker has a purpose necessarily.

8. Then he says: ‘The meaning of purpose...’ This is the meaning of the real or desired purpose, which is the ultimate goal and the ultimate end, which is the attainment of truth as it really is.

9. Then he says: ‘Thus the affirmation of the realities of knowledge...’ Having said earlier that had there been no knowledge, there would have been no search or investigation, which amounts to the vanity of the mission of the prophets, the strife of reasonable people, and the quest of saints and sages. This would entail the vanity of divine bounty; that is, that the world emanates from the Pure Bounty, since that is intended for the acquisition of knowledge as in the holy (prophetic) tradition: ‘I was a hidden treasure, then I wanted to be known, so I created the world.’ Otherwise (Creation) would have been possible by chance and random, as some heretics have claimed.

In short, there is no doubt that striving exists, as we find that humans are fashioned for it from their birth to their death, as the rest of the parts of the world are naturally made to seek and move in general. However, every nature is ordered to do what it has been created for, as the Almighty says, ‘Did you then think that We created you in vain and that unto Us, you will not be returned’ (23:115). His Majesty also says: ‘And the [one] who fore-ordained and guided rightly’ (87:3).

There is no doubt that searching applies to what is conceived and ends necessarily by necessity of choice in what is desired, which is knowledge; I mean, finding the object of desire through movement. For everybody, according to the company of truth, senses what is desired by everyone according to his degree and rank, as will appear in the coming chapter of this book, God willing. For, the certainty of knowledge proves the reality of the good, as it is rather the goal itself. For, at that point searching ceases and the object of searching is attained, which is a drop in an inexhaustible ocean.

1. The rest of the linguistic and verbal remarks of Mīr Dāmād and Zamakhsharī are omitted.

10. Then he says: 'Since it is not possible to exhaust what has no end...' By the object of a search or its end, he means that when the good is attained, rest follows. For, motion in the wake of arriving at the goal and end amounts to motion towards what has no goal, which is the height of absurdity.

11. He says next: 'The past occurring at the beginning of the sciences...' This statement is very weak in point of grammar and connotation. Perhaps the author means that, as mentioned in the science of metaphysics, some metaphysical questions help in understanding the goal in question. Similarly, the physical sciences, and the knowledge of existential realities also help in achieving the intended goal, which is the intent of what he wishes to explain in this book. Therefore, the seeker of this science, which exceeds the conventional philosophical instinct, ought to begin with training in scientific exercises and acquiring in that way an abundant part of the metaphysical sciences, as well as a complete share of the physical sciences. He will then have acquired a degree of excellence and superiority over those who are content to seek the physical sciences which are like a ladder of ascent to that higher degree. In that way, it is possible that his words, 'the knowledge of the thing' is the accusative of the verb 'he wants', and his word 'superiority' the accusative of the verb 'intends' or vice versa as in some editions... However, 'bringing out' means release of the constraints of formal wisdom and the freeing of the soul from the bounds of doubts and suspicions, as well as criticism and correction which have prevailed among superficial scholars and those adept at discussion and debate. It is necessary nonetheless for the soul to be trained in theoretical exercises and judicial disputes, as well as to empty the mind of imaginary and diabolical fictions and to fill the inner soul with divine rituals and holy reminiscences, to read the divine words, and to purify the heart of ugly attributes, false opinions, and evil creeds. He would then become one of the people of second nature, who follow the path which exceeds the common intellects. From God flows assistance at the beginning and the end.

12. He says: '*Metaphysike*...' These words refer to the knowledge of God Almighty, such as proving His existence, His unity, His beautiful attributes, and His supreme perfections, as well as the fact that He is the real Agent and desired Goal. The first of what Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī has given in his translations is that God Almighty is the first of all first entities, the First and Last, the Outer and Inner Being and that He is the Cause of the existences and essences of all things, in Him there is no imperfection or potentiality, 'nothing is like unto Him', nothing is equal to Him in rank, and His being has no cause or purpose; otherwise these would precede Him. He has no contrary, or else the negation of the contrary would be the cause of His existence, as is the case with all contraries. He is in no need of anything, has no matter or form, and is alone perfection, in the sense that the degree of any existence is only from Him. Nothing is free of Him and He is not free of anything, 'From Him not a speck of dust will escape' (34:3).

His existence in itself does not belong to another; otherwise duality would cease. Nor is there an existence similar to His existence, or else He would not be above perfection. For He is the unique One, who knows Himself and is thinking thought. He is also wise in the sense that He possesses knowledge through the best knowable and is living in the same sense. He is also the most pleased with Himself; for nothing is external to His Essence and He is All-encompassing. How fine is what the translator has said in Persian after ascribing to Him His attributes of perfection, including justice, wisdom, bounty, life, power, and real unicity as follows:

When we call all these God, Most Exalted, we do not intend to say all these are Him. Rather, He is the totality, that is all these things are Him, most exalted [but He is not them].

13. He then says: 'How (the soul) has departed the intelligible world...' The following has been attributed to al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs (Ibn Sīnā) in his comments on this beautiful book: 'This does not mean that the human soul existed for a while during which it did not yearn for a body or conjunction with it, then it joined it. This is a matter whose absurdity has been shown in the sources, despite the fact that the soul was immortal.' Then he explained that in a manner which does not deserve to be attributed to his students.

I say, to begin, we do not grant that the First Master (Aristotle) intended by the soul (in that context the human soul), insofar as he was going to mention that after a detailed discussion of particular souls, saying: 'As for the soul of man..., we grant that.' However, he only meant the type of that soul, seeing that the types, according to the Shaykh, the Master, and the majority of the philosophers, refer in particular to the rational reality which belongs to it upon its causation.

Secondly, his words: 'Even though it will not die', follow from the words of the translator: 'It is true that the soul is not a body and it will not die.' That in fact is an indication that the soul has come down and once it existed prior to the body, but this is not the case and is the responsibility of the translators (of this book). However, the author of the book was called upon to refer to what had preceded in the previous section or the preceding book, then proceed to explain its meaning. However, since the purpose of asserting the descent of that soul was to show the mode of the human soul's ascent to its source, he says: 'We are done with asserting its endurance, so let us mention the mode of its return.' You should know this! Moreover what has appeared to me with respect to that soul is that it refers to the angelic and divine soul, as has been reported from the statements of our Lord, the Commander of the Faithful (i.e. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib), and that departing the intelligible world refers to its intention to reform the worlds beneath it, as implied in these words of (the author): 'It first moved from the first world towards the second world, then the third world, as will be shown.' That soul is the spirit which guides our Prophet and his successors, may God bless them all. As for universal and particular souls, they refer to the particular (spirits') relations to any given order

of reality, particular or universal. It is clear, as appears from his own words, that it emanates from reason and is associated with it, in the sense that when reason began to yearn, that noble soul came into being. Therefore, it is prior to the second and third worlds, let alone the bodily isthmuses, and that it is the source of imparting to the whole that which it derived from the intellect. So you should consider!

14. He then says: 'Only every intelligible entity possesses life...' Al-Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) writes: 'That is every immaterial entity only. That is, there is no being or perfection of being, which is intelligible and immaterial absolutely, but pertains to Him in actuality, since He knows Himself and any corollary of His knowledge of Himself, whether it is matter or subsidiary to matter, in actuality. Indeed, He is Self-knowing, because His Essence is free of matter and is independent thereof, as is the case with every immaterial entity and whether He can be said to know or not know. Now the second entity involves composition; for every existing entity may partake of knowledge, the reality of intelligibility consisting in its being liable to change or not. However, the second alternative does not apply to anything immaterial, insofar as any condition pertaining to it is necessary, just as everything that could be conjoined to it. What then is its inner status? If He knows Himself, then the intelligibles which are next to Himself could be possibly known by Him and whatever is possible with respect to this being is necessary. For He is an immutable Entity in His state of first perfection and thus intelligibles are known to Him without intermediary, as well as what ensues upon their union. Thus, the general intelligible, which is the rational life, would be known to Him and is the best life and the most delectable.

His words: 'in the intelligible world' denotes the world is free of material affiliations. He adds: 'Fixed therein and permanent and cannot be separated from it. That is, that abstraction or separation does not arise at one time or another, but is permanent, because its cause, which consists of self-perfection by means of the First Perfection is permanent or fixed. For there is no rank thereof that he seeks or perfection he aspires to other than what has been accorded to it'. Here end the author's words with some additions and summations.

I say, as far as the words of the translator are concerned, every intelligible entity is a subject whose predicate is that, as appears from their two parallels. His words 'possessed of life' in the nominative in some editions may be predicated of the subject of it, which is allowed in conjunctive cases. Life is in fact the principle of understanding and action, so that whoever possesses a nobler understanding, such as intellection, and whose action is higher than generating motion, mobility and the tool, would be of nobler and higher life. In fact, where the principle of understanding is identical with the principle of action, so that its understanding is identical with action, is more deserving of that name, because it is free of that kind of composition. Moreover, intellectual entities have a nobler life than ours in this sense. He then adds some other attributes belonging to that entity, the first being

that it is intellectual; namely, that it is an intelligence, as his word 'only' indicates. The second is that it possesses a rational life; namely, that it is the essence of its understanding and action; and the third is that it is not susceptible of any of the effects; that is, is not susceptible of any effect beneath it. Otherwise, reason always receives emanations from the Higher Principle.

He then adds other attributes, such as that it dwells at rest in the intelligible world, but both do not apply to the intelligible world, except in the sense of dwelling at rest or heading towards what is not its principle, as the universal soul is said to head toward what is below, through motion, descent and direction, although it does not abandon its station, as (the author) will state later.

Moreover, it is firmly established in the intelligible world, its establishment being equivalent to its fixed location, whereby it is not deterred by anything from gazing upon the greatness of its First Principle and the lights flowing from Him. Similarly, its dwelling in that concentration from which its gaze never falters; and that it does not move towards any other place; that is, its rank never changes in point of concentration and seeking the light, despite the fact that in that respect its rank is analogous to its rank in the former respect. For, each of the higher realities occupies a rank which it does not exceed; for 'There is not one of us but has a well-known station' (37:164).

He also argues that it has no place other than its place toward which it might move; that is, that its being and its quiddity are the same as its place and its rank. For, were it other, then seeking would be possible, as in the urge to seek perfection by its seekers, since there is no higher rank than its own, as is obvious. Nor does it seek anything of the lower entities than its First Principle, insofar as it views itself, and thus is not driven to seek any place other than its own; as far as something other than itself; insofar as there is nothing other than its First Principle, who has made it perfect when He created it so that the power of possibility could not allow for anything greater than it, so that whichever way it turns imperfection would ensue, which is absurd, as you have heard the interpretations of the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā).

15. He says: 'Every rational entity has a desire...' When the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) discussed the human soul, he said the following: 'That is, insofar as it is an entity which does not require to inhere in matter, but is moved by desire; that is, acquires something it did not possess before. That entity follows the entity which is pure reason only; namely, insofar as it does not acquire perfection in the first stage of its substantiality but is of a secondary degree. That is, it will not be purely rational in its substantive reality and its successive perfection. Although in its essence it is bereft of matter, it nevertheless requires matter, as far as the perfection of its essence as it comes to be after it did not exist.

The proof of this is this. Every condition which arises after it did not exist depends on corporal motions and is referred to the circular motion (of the heavens).

That proof does not depend on the fact that change or renewal is corporal, but on the fact that it is simple change and renewal. If so, then it is not possible that that kind of entity, which has not acquired its perfections upon coming to be purely rational; that is, disassociated from matter and its relations in every respect.' (Here end his [Ibn Sīnā's] words.

I say: look how he (Ibn Sīnā) has tried hard to justify what he believes and has diverted the sense of the discussion to what its expositor did not intend to say. However, how fine is this attempt or endeavour, were it in conformity with what he says!

The truth which is worthy of consent, as you have learnt, is that what is intended is the soul of the whole; that is the angelic and divine soul and the reason which is pure reason, so long as it is directed towards its Maker, as reason only. When it looks inward and recognizes that it has been filled with the light of its creation, which is identical with all those intelligibles every one of which is the original reality of every existing entity, it will then understand that those original realities, which are in other words God's beautiful names and the lights of His beauty which needed to be revealed and shown outwardly, reason, then, as the sum-total of those intelligibles needed to be revealed also. Thus, the universal and divine soul emanated from Him. Soul is then reason taking the form of yearning, which is the meaning of his words: 'Every rational entity is possessed of desire.' Therefore, that entity follows the entity, which is pure reason, and possesses no desire. He then explains that in these words: 'When reason, considered as reason only, acquires a certain desire; that is, acquires a desire in the way we mentioned, it will follow, through that desire, a certain course and will not remain in its original position.'

16. He says: 'And if reason acquires...' Perhaps the Shaykh (Ibn Sīnā) read this as 'the rational' which he interpreted as the soul and so has said: 'Then its search for what it yearns for follows a path other than that of reason, since the path of reason is very clear, and it is one in which a thing does not arise due to its being straight-forward or due to an imperfection in that thing's essence. For if it could miss that, while it could desire its company, then it must necessarily be sought by way of change rather than immutability. For immutability is not revealed due to the removal of imperfection, but rather a failure on its part of the need for being polished from another side.' This is what is given in some manuscripts, his intention being clear and what you have learnt is sufficient.

17. He says: 'Because it yearns for action much...' As these words did not tally with the Shaykh's aim, he observed: 'This involves some distortion. For, were the soul to see the intelligible world, it would be accomplished, since seeing consists in receiving the form of the object, whereas its meaning would depend on the relation to the rank of the things inherent in the mind; that is, that which it aspires to see in the mind. In short, because yearning is generally the effect of a detailed experience, such as one yearning for copulation without experiencing it, as in the case of

brute animals, which yearn for a compound action which is spelled out only upon completion.' (The end.)

I say, may God have mercy on the Shaykh, how he has striven to interpret the words (of the author) at his will, although he had said in various places in these words: 'Whatever does not reach your understanding should be consigned to the realm of possibility.' His aim, as we established, is that when reason perceived what God has stored in it of His treasures, as well as the rational jewels which those treasures contain, together with what they contain of the desire of external manifestation, it became a soul yearning for action and apparition in the beauties of things, wherein that is manifested in their effects due to the realities it discovered in (actual) reason: that is, in its rational rank when it was only (potential) reason. This led to his words: 'The soul, then, is reason which has taken the form of desire.' So reflect!

18. Then he says: 'Such as the woman who became pregnant and suffered the pangs...' In some manuscripts, we have received or has acquired...¹

19. He says: 'Until it emerges into actuality, together with the form.' This means that it is like a pregnant woman [who desires to actualize her potential]; the reason we are saying this [is because], when something acquires the form its object desires, namely, it becomes actualized by means of the rational forms, which are God's treasures stored in it, as (the Qur'ān) says: 'There is nothing for which we do not have the treasures' (15:21). In that sense, 'brought to act (or actualized)' could be explicative, assertive or repetitive. For the Shaykh has appreciated the sense of actual need. For he says: 'It needed that that which it contained potentially should be perfected by means of rational form as an existent in actuality.' Then he says: 'It must also be said that this resembles its desire for the sensible world, which, as we have shown, is the world in which innovation is sought.' (The end.) This, according to him, follows from referring the soul here to man's soul. But this is contradicted by the translator's reference to reason in the course of the discussion. This, coming from the pen of this great man is very strange. That is why some writers have conjectured that these comments are not his, and this is not too far-fetched.

20. He then says: 'And it suffers the pangs...' This refers to the pangs attendant upon delivering what is ingrained in it of rational forms, as well as bringing out the luminary jewels stored in its treasures into the open stretch of appearance and the realm of corporeality. This is due to (the soul's) yearning for the world of sense, which consists in yearning for outer dealings. It rarely happens 'that God's finery which He fashioned for His servants' (7:32) shall be excluded from the seas of His generosity.

21. He says: 'And when reason consents to partake of downward desire, the soul is formed from it.' I wished that the Shaykh had explained this point here.

1. Text is not legible.

However, he did not attempt to explain it, but dealt with what follows. In short, this is the conclusion of the premises which he mentioned, having mentioned it first in connection with the classification of rational substances. He repeats it here for the sake of confirmation and methodology. The crux is that when reason only looked into itself and recognized that it has been filled with the light of the glory of the Almighty creator, those lights being intended in themselves as a means of revelation and clarity; reason being only one of these lights, (reason) yearned to emerge from the darkness of collective concealment. It realized that that was possible in the ranks beneath it, since above it is the Mystery of all mysteries, so that whenever descent is effected, it became clearer and the multiplicity was reduced to individuality. The end of that journey is the sensible world which constitutes the pure witness in juxtaposition of the Mystery of mysteries. Thus, reason necessarily acquires desire and, once it took the form of desire, it became a soul, after being formed and emanated. Thus, the soul is reason *per se*, just as reason is soul *per accidents*, where reason takes the form of desire and thus becomes a soul.

22. He says: 'The soul then is reason...' The Shaykh says: 'That is, the soul is a substance, stripped of matter in itself. It has acquired desire for the sensible world, upon receiving that form, whereby it communicated with the sensible world and became a soul. It is actually soul, insofar as it is the perfection of an organic body.' (The end.)

23. He then says: 'However, the soul is...' The Shaykh says: 'What is actualized through it, as an object of desire, could be something universal or particular. If universal, then its universal form is actually constituted and then it disposes of it in a rational manner, without departing its universal rational world.' (The end.)

I say that in his words, '(reason) took the form of desire' in relation to the object is an admission of a noble and high principle, which is, that every time the soul turns towards an object, it acquires the form of that object, as though it is identical with it. Maybe, the intent is that the soul, or the universal and angelic soul, once it desires universally certain interests pertaining to the sum-total of the order of the universe, the forms or universal souls are actually produced through manifestation whereby each of the celestial spheres acquires the form of the soul; and what is above it.

They are then managed rationally and universally without becoming part of their bodies or departing their universal realm. This is what happens when they acquire the forms of particular souls, which have been formed through their universal, celestial forms. For, everything in the lower world passes from one heaven to the next until it reaches the earth, each of these particulars having a form in each heaven corresponding to the rank of that heaven. The same is true of the order of ascent, whether in the form of action or being. For wherever it desires particulars, it changes into them due to their universe, and then it lays down the laws and commissions prophets to identify them.

24. He says: 'This is due to the management of their proximate causes...' It

appears from this that the heavenly bodies are proximate causes of the particulars of this world.

The Shaykh says: 'This is due to the fact that proximate causes bring the forms and matters together. But you should know that the role of heavenly bodies consists in preparation and disposition, since specific forms emanate from non-corporal principles. However, he mentions the heavenly bodies because they cause the forms to emanate from the higher principles just as they are. However, if they are in touch with the heavenly preparation, they are mixed with inevitable conditions of actions and passions due to heavenly and terrestrial causes from which each derives its share.' He also mentioned in that footnote the way in which the soul abstracts intelligibles and interprets them, as he understood the matter with respect to the soul. However, we have omitted this because it is not helpful.

I say it appears from Aristotle's teaching that the ultimate cause in the semen is the father, and in eggs, it is the bird. For he has shown that that is not enough without reference to outer principles, which are the heavenly bodies, according to Aristotle, and the active intellect, according to latter-day philosophers. As for animals begotten without generation, the ultimate causes according to Aristotle are the heavenly bodies, through the intercession of psychic faculties which emanate from them; but according to the moderns it is the active intellect. Aristotle's reason for holding this view is that the cause of change or generation can only be a body or a power in a body and the action, which is the outcome of change, can only be due to a mutable agent, so that the agent of change cannot be one thing and the agent of the final change something else.

25. He says: 'It is rather within it and emanates from it...' That is, when the universal soul reaches particular entities and arranges them in the best way possible and manages them in the best way, not as confined in it as emanation from within it, but rather as inhering in it as though it has become its own nature. It is emanation from it in the sense that it was not affected by the inherence of forms in it upon its own request, but rather by acquiring evil habits which the body cannot be rid of, as we will show later, 'except by grave strife,' as he says.

26. He says: 'It moves in the first world initially, then towards the second and then the third worlds.' The Shaykh did not touch on this or what is then said about the human soul, because that does not apply thereto; as he interpreted the soul earlier.

In short, the first (world) denotes the rational world, the invisible world, the higher world and the divine world. The second denotes the world of the soul, the world of ideas, of shadows, of Lordship and Command. The third denotes the world of experience, of universal isthmuses which consists of heavenly and terrestrial bodies and that of royalty and creation.

27. He says: 'For reason did not abandon if...' That is the soul, despite crossing those three worlds, was not abandoned by reason. For, the soul is simply reason

formed in the shape of desire, so that reason is its inner aspect. In the soul's progress and its acquisition of God's tincture, the nature of reason does not change and does not leave its locus. For the soul acts by means of fulfilled emanation and the continuous assistance of reason, as well as all other functions in reality. The soul is actually an intermediary, resembling a tool of reason insofar as all beauty, elegance, and perfection witnessed in the world of sense, derive from reason.

28. He says: 'Because reason...'. This shows that the corporal faculty cannot undertake permanent functions because the permanence of activity on the part of the soul is due to reason and not to its being the form of the body.

29. He then says: 'As for the souls of the rest of the animals...' He intended here to explain the appearance of the soul in particular sensible entities, so he began by mentioning animals, although the soul's first manifestation is found in plants, but he begins with animals because it is perceptible in them. That which is manifested in animals, even if it goes wrong, is real, since some aspects of the animal can be in contact with man and so be released of hardship, and so it looks as though it did not stray. However some animals do go astray, as in the case of the wild beasts. Nevertheless they do not perish or die, since upon the disintegration of their bodies they continue to exist in the world of the isthmus as distinct identities, which are then resuscitated in forms suited to the different species. They continue thereby to be in touch with the master of their species and the master of their talisman, which is one of the reasons corresponding to the last rank of accidental reasons.

In the case of some of those souls, which happen to be the noblest, a human soul interposes between them and their effects. That soul is the master of the human species. However, an animal or vegetable soul may also interpose, depending on the nobility of the subject, so that those reasons which are the sources of the animal natures having ideal souls will return to those souls despite their number and diversity. However, those animal souls which only sense, but do not imagine, such as insects and their like, will not perish, as we said, although they do not continue to exist as distinct entities, but rather continue to be in touch with the master of their species, just as the rays of the sun are, which follow in its wake when it sets, despite the fact that they are numerous and change from day to day.

30. He says: 'If it is found...' in the conditional, that is, if there is found in this world any species of souls of any degree, whether it is animal, beastly or leonine, including insects and the like. Those souls belong in part to that sensuous nature, which is the universal soul, that is, reason in itself. That species must have its own images emanating from the sensuous nature from which life flows into that body which corresponds to it.

31. He says: 'The same is true of the vegetative soul...' That is, what was said in the case of the animal will apply to the plants, insofar as they are living. The degrees of life, however, differ in point of strength and weakness, in breadth of degree or narrowness of degree. For all souls, whether human, animal, or vegetative, have

emanated and emerged from a single principle possessed of rational, permanent, and non-circular life. However, each one of them has a life appropriate to its own rank of nobility. Nobility is the strength or weakness of all those souls, which are incorporeal entities and are not liable to partition essentially, although it may be liable to it [partition] accidentally. This will be shown in its proper context.

32. He says: 'As for the human soul, it has three parts ...' You should not ignore the fact that the human soul is divisible in those three senses. However, in the principle of understanding, notion and growth is one thing which has various powers, each of which has other subservient powers. Thus, the principle of all understandings and of all notions emanating from the animal, vegetative, or physical, proves powers and is really the soul in its unifying powers. For, it receives from the source of its generation, together with the body, certain modes of perception or promotion corresponding to its effects, whether physical, psychic, or animal, which culminate in the appearance of man. Whenever it attains a level of perfection, its scope or range is more extensive. The soul of man is the perfection of all that precedes it in the form of animal, vegetable, and physical species, the perfection of a thing being that thing together with what is added to it. Man is, in reality, the sum-total of all those specific properties and his form is the form of all of them.

33. He says: 'And it departs the body, when it distinguishes and ceases to function ...' The Shaykh says: 'That is the human (soul) which is the primary one possessing those faculties. The truth is that every man and every animal has a single soul, which has a number of faculties and is the source of the emergence of those faculties. But which faculty remains with it is another matter.' (The end.)

I say these words refer to a serious matter, which is the unity of the soul in relation to its multiple faculties. That is, the living, understanding, bearing, seeing, rational, nourishing, growing, generating principle in the physical body which moves, grows, and senses, is really one thing, which is the soul. Scholars have actually differed, some holding that the body has many souls governing it, some being sensitive, some reflective, and some irascible. The Shaykh maintains that the soul is one, but performs certain functions by itself and other functions by means of different organs, and from each faculty a particular action emanates. Those who deny unity have argued, on the other hand, that we find that plants possess a vegetative soul, while animals possess the sensitive soul, without the reflective or rational soul. Having observed that each of these exists apart from the other, we concluded that they are different. For, were they all one, it would be impossible for one to exist apart from the other. However, as you see, this is not the place for refutation or confirmation.

The advocates of the unity of the soul, including al-Shaykh and his followers, have argued that we have demonstrated that different functions depend on different faculties, so that each faculty in itself is such that only one specific function emanates from it, as in the *De anima* (*Kitāb al-Nafs*). Were it not for the existence

of one property common to all those faculties, serving as their ruler, they could not resist each other at times, while assisting it at other times. Had those faculties been arranged according to a certain cause which links them together, assisting or resisting each other would not be possible. That proves that there exists something common to them, which is either a body or something inhering in it. The finest two alternatives have been disproved in *De anima*; therefore the agent which conjoins those faculties is one thing which is neither a body nor something bodily, and that is the soul.

However, the credible truth regarding the unity of the soul is not the obvious implication of their words, since this is higher than the formal connotation of the philosophers' words. The unity of the soul is higher than that and he who is at any point unable to recognize the unity of his soul cannot recognize the unity of his Lord. That consists in believing that the soul reasons, perceives, sees, hears, desires, and grows by virtue of a single faculty which is identical with itself. But when it descended into the body, which is divisible and partible, its different perceptions, to which that partition and division belong, acquired various avenues and windows to its various perceptions, which it apprehends nonetheless by means of a single faculty. This is similar to one of poor eyesight who uses a glass to assist his faculty of vision. How could a reasonable person proclaim that glasses are actually capable of vision? This is similar to the soul, the secret being that the human soul has three levels, the level of reason and holiness, that of breadth and imagination, and that of sensation and physical nature. Any of the attributes or operations which pertain to the soul at any of these levels is found at the other. For those perceptive and motive faculties exist in the material body in a variety of ways; since matter exists for the sake of diversity and partition. Therefore, the locus of sight cannot be the same as the locus of hearing, and so on. Moreover, matter exists at the level of the imagination, and at the realm of the animal soul in a variety of ways, not in the manner of what is different or diversified with respect to corporeal matter, but rather by virtue of a single position. In fact, there is no position here, since it has a single or common faculty which hears, sees, and smells, in such a way that *sensus communis* is not divided or displaced. However, at the soul's level of reason, everything exists in a single and holy manner, which is free of the admixture of plurality or diversity, but is nevertheless multiple in the real sense. Thus, the rational man is a spiritual being whose rational parts and faculties subsist in a single locus, which admits of no real plurality, as will be shown in the context of Aristotle's view later on.

Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī

Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1721) was one of the greatest proponents of Ṣadrīan philosophy and theoretical gnosis in the late Safavid period. He studied with some of the outstanding masters of his time such as Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrizī, Lāhijī, and Shaykh Ḥusayn Tunakābunī.

His interest in philosophy and intellectual sciences coincided with the rise in power of exoteric jurists who were opposed to philosophy together with the surrounding of Isfahan by the Afghan army. Shah Sultan Ḥusayn, as a result of court politics and the jealousy of some scholars towards Ardistānī, had become hostile towards him, and ordered his exile. Ardistānī endured much suffering as the result of his exile. He went to Qom and nevertheless managed to compose several major works and train a number of students.

His most important work is *al-Ḥikmah al-Ṣādiqiyyah* in which he defends Mullā Ṣadrā’s philosophical perspective against those of the Peripatetics. In his writings, he treats such subjects as eschatology, the principiality of existence, the theory of emanation and a commentary upon Ibn Sīnā’s *Shifā’*. Much of his work appears, however, in the form of Ardistānī’s lectures written down by his various pupils.

In this chapter, we have included a section of Ardistānī’s *al-Ḥikmah al-Ṣādiqiyyah* which begins with a discussion on the soul and its faculties and continues with a survey concerning actions and passions of the soul. Ardistānī continues to investigate the theoretical and practical faculties of the soul, and the problem of the essential unity of the soul and at the same time the multiplicity of its faculties.

M. Aminrazavi

ŞĀDIQIAN WISDOM

al-Ḥikmah al-Şādiqiyyah

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Chapter 24

Concerning Actions and Passions Peculiar to Human Beings

As we have finished our discussion concerning animal faculties, now it behoves us to start discussion about the faculties peculiar to human beings.

We say that actions issue forth from human beings which do not come from other animals. The first among these actions is speaking by conventional sounds in order to make others understand his intentions and to understand those of others. This quality is peculiar to human beings among other animals, because he cannot dispense with association with others, both in his livelihood and in his continued existence. He is not like other animals, which are self-sufficient. In their order of life, they can do without the members of their species; their food, drink, and clothing depend on nature alone. He would either perish or would have a restricted life, and in that case, his life would not be worthy of human life. That is, a life that would make possible the attainment of what is considered to be the ultimate end of the creation of human beings. On the contrary, man is in need of things in addition to those found in nature, such as the food made of those things found in nature or the clothing fabricated of those stuffs produced by nature. Because entities of nature, whether clothes or foods, when not worked up by human deliberation and not modified through artisanship, do not suit him and so he does not enjoy a well-ordered life. As to other animals, their clothes have been created for them by nature. This is due to the nobility and the superiority of humankind and the imperfection of other animals. For this reason, humankind is in need of various professions and crafts, which a single person is not able to accomplish. For their acquisition everyone is in need of an assistant and a partner, so that this one makes bread for that one and that one weaves for this one; and commodities from distant cities are fetched for that one, and the latter gives in exchange something from his own city and so on and so forth. For these and other hidden reasons, the human being is in dire need of the natural ability to make himself known to his partners and associates. One thing that is appropriate for this purpose is the human voice, because it can easily be differentiated into letters, of which many compounds can be made spontaneously. And because the human voice is among those entities whose parts exist separately (and when one part is generated the foregoing part perishes), it is best suited and most secure to make our intentions known to those whom we

want to know and to withdraw them from those whom we do not want to know. This is because if what is made known were enduring and persistent, its purport would be seen and heard by every one.

After the human voice, what best suits this purpose is allusion by signs (*ishārah*), except that allusion takes place where there is vision, in a special direction, and by means of distinctive gestures, in order to signify different meanings and intentions. This is extremely painstaking and difficult. Again, by allusion one can only demonstrate the sensible things and not those things which are non-sensible by nature. They could not be understood through allusion.

As to sound, it is not in need of vision for observing certain gesticulations and gestures, nor does its perception require a medium, as that of light for colour, nor does it demand signs and signals. So nature has provided the soul with sounds by which it is enabled to make known and to convey its intentions to others.

As to other animals, they too have specific sounds by which they make known to others what they have in themselves. But the signification of those sounds is by nature, which in a cursory fashion indicates their approval or disapproval, their pleasure or displeasure. But that which is appropriate for human beings is by convention (*wadʿ*); and that is due to the fact that human aims and intentions are almost indefinite; so it is impossible to indicate them by nature through an almost infinite number of sounds. So man alone of all beings has been specifically endowed with speech through conventional sounds. That itself is due to the necessity to know things and to make them known, both of which are again due to the exigency of giving and taking in due measure and are owing to the other necessities of life.

The second among those actions specific to man is the invention of arts and crafts. It cannot be said that the invention of arts and crafts is not peculiar to human beings, simply because other animals, and especially birds and bees, are in possession of crafts as they make homes and habitations for themselves.

What we mean to say is that arts and crafts acquired through invention and deduction is peculiar to man alone. What proceeds (issues forth) from animals is not by discovery, invention, or deduction; rather it is through subjugation (*taskhīr*) and instinct. That is why there is no variety and diversity in their crafts.

The third among those things peculiar to man is laughter (*ḍiḥk*) and weeping (*bukāʾ*): these result from two passions peculiar to man, which can be explained as follows: when human beings perceive very rare and odd things, there ensues a passion called astonishment or wonder, which in turn is followed by laughter; and when they perceive or acquire harmful and injurious things, that perception is followed by a passion called annoyance (*tadḍajjur*), which finally ends in weeping.

The fourth among those things is the ability to avoid certain deeds and to do others; and that is due to an intrinsic belief that the former deeds are bad and repulsive and the latter are good. This can be explained as follows: the exigency

of transaction with others demands that among the deeds which are in the nature of man to do, there are some which they should not commit. This fact is known by small children, and they grow up according to this conviction. From the very beginning of their upbringing, they repeatedly hear it said that they should not do these acts, until this belief becomes as if instinct in them. Again they hear it said that there are other deeds which are contrary to those mentioned. He calls the first ones evil deeds and the second ones good. As to other animals, even if they give up acts which are in their nature to do—such as trained lions which do not eat their masters or their cubs—but this is not due to an intrinsic conviction or belief that such an act is repulsive in itself. It is due to the psychic disposition that every animal has towards for everything which causes its sustenance or for every person who feeds it, because everything beneficial is by nature pleasant to him who is benefited. It might be that this disposition is in the animal's very nature, or it might be due to a Divine inspiration proper to each animal without, of course, being based on any conviction.

Among those passions peculiar to man is that of shame or bashfulness. One could explain it as follows: Sometimes a human being realizes that someone else has become cognizant that he has done something that is universally agreed upon as inappropriate. Due to this awareness there occurs a sort of psychological passivity which is called shame.

Among those traits one can mention fear (*khawf*), which can be expounded thus: when a human being conjectures that something in the future shall hurt him, he is affected by a psychological condition called fear. But other animals do not have such a passion except with regard to the present moment or the impending moment.

And among those passions is the one opposite of fear, and that is hope (*rajāʾ*). Other animals do not possess hope except as it is present expectation. For instance, what ants do when conveying grains of wheat to their nests, being forewarned of the rain that shall fall in the future, is because they imagine that it would rain instantaneously, just as other animals flee from their adversaries because they fancy that the latter will smite them forthwith.

Again what is specific to human beings is the power of deliberation and good management concerning future affairs, whether they should enact appropriate measures or not. So the man does at this specific time what his deliberation would not permit him to do at another time. As for other animals, their provisions for the future are of one single category, which is ingrained in them by nature, whether it be consonant with their ultimate end or not.

The most peculiar of all peculiarities of man is the apprehension of universal ideas which have been totally divested of matter and its accessories, as well as the attainment of the inference of unknown things through the conception and judgment of things known. All the above acts and dispositions are only found in human beings and they, in their entirety are specific to the human soul even though

some of them are corporeal; they exist in the human body by virtue of the human soul and as such they do not exist in other animals.

Chapter 25

Concerning the Theoretical and the Practical Faculties of the Human Soul

We say that human beings can dispose of universal things as they can dispose of particular things. There exists nothing in the universal things except the contraction of mere belief, even if it were about an action, because acts and deeds as such only aim at particulars, otherwise it would be conceivable that an action proceeded from a human agent in the external world, which would be universal in its specific existence. However, these particular things only issue forth from particular acts of volition: because a universal as such cannot be specified to this rather than to that particular. So human beings have two different faculties; the one able to comprehend the universal judgments and the other able to deliberate over particular things, which should be done or abandoned, those things which are advantageous or disadvantageous. Again the latter faculty is able to deliberate over things beautiful or ugly, good or evil. That [discernment] would be through a mood of valid or non-valid deduction, and an argument which aims at particular things and those contingent things which shall take place in the future. I said contingent things, because the existence or non-existence of necessary or impossible things does not become the object of deliberation. Again the existenti- ation of past things, inasmuch as they are past, does not become the object of practical deliberation. When the latter faculty judges, its judgment is followed by the motion of an integral faculty, which itself causes the motion of the whole body. As for animals, it follows the judgments of other faculties. Again the latter faculty seeks help and assistance from the one able to contemplate the universals. Thence the human soul derives the major premise of the syllogism over which she broods and deliberates. So the first faculty peculiar to the human soul is the one connected with theory (*naẓar*) and is named the theoretical intellect (*‘aql naẓarī*); the second one is the faculty connected with action, which is called the practical intellect (*‘aql ‘amālī*). The former is concerned with truth or falsity (in judgments); the latter with the good or bad as manifest in the particulars. The first one is involved in assertions about the necessary, the contingent, and the impossible; and the latter is engaged with the ugly, the beautiful, and the legally permissible (*mubāḥ*). The theoretical principles of the former are taken from rationally certain and self-evident truths, those of the latter faculty derive from widely known facts (*mashhūrāt*), popularly accepted opinions (*maqbulāt*), suspicious beliefs (*maẓnūnāt*), and feeble practices that are based on suspect and untrustworthy experiences. The practical intellect requires the body and the bodily organs in all its actions, whereas the theoretical intellect needs the

body and its organs only accidentally and not persistently, as we shall explain to you later. Neither of the two intellects is identical to the human soul, because the human soul is the thing which possesses both faculties. This latter part (concerning the two intellects), is the synopsis of what the Shaykh (Avicenna) has mentioned in his *Sufficientia* (*Shifā'*). He has expressed himself in utmost beauty in that work, except where he writes: 'neither of the two faculties is identical to the human soul.' And what he has stated in propounding this proposition is not conclusive, because disposing of universal things presupposes the existence of an immaterial faculty which is above all the other faculties. But the disposing of particular things does not imply or presuppose the existence of a different faculty. It may be that that which disposes of, is the soul itself together with all its multifarious faculties, because such disposal is the deduction of singular propositions from singular premises. This is contributed by imagination, together with universal premises contributed by the theoretical intellect. In such disposals the human soul does not need another faculty. When the soul causes movements and these movements are provoked by psychic motives, just as when the animal soul causes movement in order to attain to its objects of desire (as when the animal sees food or fodder and lustfully hastens towards it without deliberation about the consequences, whether they be good or bad, beautiful or ugly); that soul is called the bestial soul (*nafs bahīmiyyah*). If this movement is provoked by deliberation and consideration of the consequences, in terms of being good or evil, beautiful or ugly, in this life or in the hereafter; (this itself is impossible without having a previous knowledge that this is good or bad, beautiful or ugly), and this cannot be comprehended except through a deduction whose major premise is a universal derived from the theoretical intellect and a particular minor premise contributed by the imagination, it is called the practical intellect. So the practical intellect is the soul, inasmuch as its stimulations to actions are in accord with the ruling of the intellect. The human soul has a natural tendency to perfect itself through knowledge, by means of the theoretical faculty which is called theoretical intellect by philosophers. It is also inclined by nature to perfect itself by action and that, by means of the practical faculty, is called the practical intellect. The soul acquires virtues with regard to this faculty.

Chapter 26

The rational soul is neither a body nor the impression of a body. The best way to expound on this problem is the way which we shall present here. It is as follows: the rational soul is able to comprehend the universal natures; and the universal, because it is equally related to all its particulars, is itself divested of those limitations; because that which is limited by the limit of material particularity, is itself an individual subsumed under that universal. Hence every universal is stripped of matter and all its concrete adjuncts such as quantity, quality, position, and so on.

Let us cast a glance at the universal nature and see how it can be immaterial. Is its immateriality with regard to that which is abstracted from matter or with regard to that which abstracts from matter? Is the existence of this nature, which is free from any position, in the extra-mental reality, or is it in the rational substance? It is impossible to say that it is so with respect to the extra-mental reality. So we are left with the assumption that the universal nature is immaterial and free from position, place, and other limitations. Only when it exists in the intellect, is it without position. It cannot be hinted at by the senses; it is not susceptible of partition or division, and so on. So it is necessary that the soul, which grasps the natural universal, should likewise be without position; because if it had position, that in which it existed would also have position; since every thing which has position in the external reality has position with respect to this (mental) existence even if accidentally. So the perceiving subject of the universal, which is unbounded by nature should inevitably be like its object. Hence the agent perceiving the universal cannot be particular as its object demands. So we come to the conclusion that the soul is not a bundle consisting of the particularity of material things, otherwise everything existing in it would be particular. By its being particular what we mean is that it is not ambiguous nor in a state of absolute indetermination, but on the contrary its being is limited and bounded, but not by physical limits, as you shall, God willing, come to know soon. This is what we had to say, by way of introduction for the beginners.

Chapter 27

As to how the soul uses the senses, we say that the faculties of the animal soul assist the soul in the acquisition of principles both for conception and judgment. This is because, when the senses are supplied with particulars, the soul is supplied with the assistance of imagination appropriate to it and it becomes apt to receive the effusion of ideas separated from matter and its adjuncts (and this, by the way, is the meaning of abstracting the universal ideas from the particulars by separating them from matter and its accessories) the soul gains the universal ideas.

Then when the soul attends to those common features which are intrinsic or extrinsic, or to those features which are dissimilar and divergent; whether they are extrinsic or intrinsic, it attains to conceptual starting-points and principles. Then when the soul takes into consideration the relationship between these five simple universals and only those combinations which, by way of affirmation or negation, are self-evident and primary; and abandons those which are not self-evident, those that need a middle term for their justification, it attains to those primary principles which are the starting-points for judgments.

Then when the soul, through the senses, finds a predicate which inheres in a subject in the judgment, no matter whether the judgment be affirmative or

negative; or again, when it finds a consequent for an antecedent, whether in a conditional, or in a disjunctive, or the negation of a disjunctive; the existence of the relationship of this predicate or consequent to the subject or antecedent, by affirmation or negation, is not restricted to certain times only. Nor is its existence at certain other times equal; rather it exists forever inasmuch as we are certain that between this predicate and this subject there is always this necessary connection and that between this consequent and this antecedent there is an essential connection or disconnection which is not fortuitous. In that case there occurs a belief for the person either through sensation or deduction as we have explained it in the appropriate place. Then, when the soul hears a report from many people so frequently that it is made impossible for it [the soul] to believe that the reporters have colluded falsely; then it gives assent, due to the continuous concatenation of reports (*tawātur*).

So the human soul needs the body's help in order to obtain the starting-points of conception and judgment, but when it attains those principles, it returns to its own essence and it does not need the organs of the body to grasp the intelligibles or to deduce them from those principles. On the contrary, she should shun and evade them, because they would avert her from her proper functions, except for those things for which she needs to return to imagination, those principles she has missed and must recapture.

Chapter 28

As to whether the soul has come into being or is eternal, we say: Know that when the Shaykh (Avicenna) saw that the soul has qualities which cannot exist in the body and in the corporeal things, he said that it [the soul] is immaterial. And when he considered that the doctrine of the unity of the soul implies either the doctrine of her divisibility and partibility; or the doctrine of a single soul being in different bodies, which are both impossible; he maintained that the soul is multiple in number. And when he considered that the personal multiplicity is not possible without matter, and that the soul before the body does not have matter, he maintained that the soul comes into being with the coming-into-being of the body. And when he observed that the doctrine of the annihilation of the soul with the annihilation of the body presupposes the view of a thing being destroyed without there being a locus capable of destruction and also presupposes the repudiation of resurrection, he came to believe in its [the soul's] survival, so that it does not perish with the extinction of the body.

But as for us, we say that the doctrine of the soul's generation is inconsistent with the doctrine of its immateriality; and again the doctrine of its everlasting survival is incongruous with the doctrine of its coming into being. So one of the learned scholars, having perspicaciously realized the inconsistency in the first doctrine and

having failed to find a way to prove that the soul is one single reality before the body which becomes multiple through the body, so as to uphold its eternity; made the assertion that the soul comes into being with the body. Since he considered the proof of the soul's immateriality paramount, he stated that the soul, after being materially generated becomes gradually immaterial. He came up with the formula that the soul is material in its generation but immaterial in its survival. He did not realize that the doctrine of soul's generation is concomitant with its annihilation.

Some of them found out the two inconsistencies and found a way out of both in the doctrine that the soul before the body is one reality, but its unity is not individual, specific, or generic unity but it is a unity in which these three kinds are subsumed; it is most analogous to the Divine unity. This unitary soul, which exists before the body, is said to be the human soul and it gets multiplied with the bodies. However, there was a divergence of opinion as to whether its multiplication with bodies is through mere relation, as is the preferred opinion of some of those who have not hit the target, or by accident, so that the jurisdiction of the one is not the same as the jurisdiction of the other. Each [soul] is different from the other in its attributes, modifications, and effects; so that the decree of the one is not pervasive in the other. So there are four schools regarding this issue, and the astute seeker should inevitably choose one of them, try to remove its vicious consequences, and repudiate the rest.

Then we say that the chosen opinion of the Shaykh (Avicenna) is almost invalid, because the doctrine of soul's coming-into-being cannot be reconciled with its immateriality. This is because everything generated is inevitably preceded by possibility and by a locus for that possibility, wherein there is the aptitude for the gradual existence of the thing which is to come to be, after the preparation of the auxiliary causes. Then how is it possible that it be immaterial and nonetheless exist in a material locus. For, it is meaningless to say that a thing is apt to receive an existence which is totally inconsistent with its constitution.

And again the doctrine of the soul's generation cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of its everlasting survival because God willing, it will become clear to you that everything which has come into being will inevitably perish.

Ardistānī's refutation of the first three alternatives

There remains the fourth view, which maintains that the soul is eternal and is one single reality which pre-existed the body, becoming multiple after being attached to the body. When we say that before its attachment to the body it is one single reality, we do not mean that its unity is material, specific, or generic, but that it is one, above and beyond all other kinds of unity. It is more like the unity of the intelligible or the Divine order. It is not, according to our view, a species under a genus. We do not believe that substance as a genus is subsumed under it. Its subsumption under it is accidental as we shall explain later.

What we said above needs some elucidation: the soul which pre-existed the generation of bodies is the universal soul. It has a universal yearning and craving to make all things manifest. This longing for self-manifestation is the form of its essence which distinguishes it from the intellect. So the soul becomes what it is through that universal yearning and desire; it is informed by it. So whenever the universal soul manifests something for which it yearns, it disperses its yearning upon it. In other words, when every part of the object of yearning and desire comes to exist in a sort of differentiated existence, the soul disperses its yearning upon those parts which have come into being and those which have been differentiated. By such differentiation, the soul itself becomes differentiated. And as the soul, by yearning for the All, is total unity, so it also, by scattering and dispersing its universal yearning upon the parts of the whole, gets variegated and manifold. As the universal yearning becomes dispersed in the bodies of the whole in the differentiated existence, so also the soul itself gets dispersed by such diffusion. In short, the body of the universe, from the centre to the periphery, whether simple or compound, is one single continuum with regard to the element of corporeity; all kinds of simple and compound substances are as members of a single person. In like manner the universal soul desiderating to manifest the whole, is a single soul for the whole of this person, which it wisely administers. Each of the particular souls is like a faculty in the universal soul, which is attached to a particular body in the body of the whole. So the relation of our particular souls to the soul of the All is like the relation of our senses to our souls. From what we said, it is evident that the soul is both eternal and one in essence, but it comes into being and becomes multiple due to its action and its orientation toward the body. This is inconceivable in material things and in the unity of the person. That is why the Shaykh (Avicenna) maintained that the soul is generated with the generation of the body, because to him the soul is a person subsumed under a species of substance. But, according to him, the substance is a genus for everything subsumed under it. Nonetheless the doctrine of the soul's being temporally prior to the body, and its being a unity which becomes multiple in accordance with the natural forms, implies its partibility and divisibility, which are inconsistent with its immateriality. So it is proper that we devote a separate chapter to propound the unity of the soul and its multiplicity.

Chapter 29

That the Soul is One in Essence and Multiple by Accident

It is impossible that the single reality in which all multiple things are unified should become multiple through the inherent properties of the quiddity. This is because if determination were inherent in the quiddity, it would be necessarily restricted in one single individual; otherwise what we assumed would not be inherent. In that case, multiplicity and diversity would be either due to the diversity of the agent or

to the diversity of the patient. If it were due to the diversity of the patient that would either be through immanence in multiple receptacles and patients, or through different relations to those receptacles. No doubt it is not possible that the multiplicity of souls should be due to the multiplicity of agents; because there are in existence no multiple agents whose agency is due to the essential diversity of the soul. If there were, we would immediately ask the same question concerning the reason for their multiplicity. For, either the agents would end up in an infinite regress or they would end in a single Agent from Whom issues forth multiple agents. Both these assumptions are absurd, so we are left with the alternative that their diversity is due to the diversity of the patients or the receptacles. We cannot say that the multiplicity of souls, with regard to the diversity of receptacles, is due to the immanence of the soul in those receptacles, because as we have already expounded, the soul is immaterial. So we are left with the doctrine that the soul comes into a relation to it. We do not mean this relatedness to be in terms of posture, parallelism, contiguity, or to have any contact with things of the kind. And an immaterial thing is not related to matter except in this sense that its action is in matter. So the relation of the soul to matter is no more than its acts issuing from intellects, natures, and material forms; the soul merely directs and regulates it [matter]. Hence the soul's plurality is due to the plurality of its acts, which are in themselves a virtue of the plurality of matter. It is evident that this multiplicity on the part of the soul is not an essential multiplicity, because if an agent does different acts, its essence does not thereby become multiple by nature, but in fact its multiplicity is merely accidental.

So it was proved that the soul is one in essence, multiple by accident. But, as to our statement that the soul is the true agent in bodies, (inasmuch as we said that it becomes multiple through the multiplicity of acts) we have already expounded it in the Divine science, wherein we said that between the first emanation (i.e. intellect) and bodies, there exists another entity called the soul, which as we have explained is eternal and one. It is impossible that the soul should be posterior to the bodies; otherwise the latter would be intrinsically involved in its existence. In that case the body would be either an agent for the soul or a patient for it. The first is impossible because material cannot give existence to the immaterial; the second alternative is impossible, because there is no receptacle for the soul and its existence, as you have already come to know that it is immaterial. But if, as we have said, the body is a receptacle for the soul's acts and a locus of manifestation for the latter's attributes, this receptivity and susceptibility of soul's action, by essence or through preparation of this susceptibility to the soul's action, is by essence: That is, no body is essentially susceptible to the soul's action and manifestation of life, except the body of the celestial spheres, so that this soul should be the soul of the celestial bodies. We have already clarified that the souls of the celestial spheres are anterior to their bodies and exist before them, and that which is anterior to the celestial body is also anterior to all bodies, as it is plain for those who are trained in

the Divine science, so this presupposes what we were trying to prove. And if, on the other hand, the body's susceptibility to soul's actions is by way of preparation, this would imply the generation of the soul, after its having been assumed to be eternal.

So it was established that the soul, which we proved to be eternal and unitary, is that which comes after the first emanation and prior to all bodies. It is indeed the proximate agent of all bodies; because the active principle of bodies cannot be the First Principle that is the intellect, except through the agency of what comes after them, i.e. the universal soul. So it became manifest that the soul is the originator of bodies, whether they be simple or compound. And since the human body is one species among corporeal substances, its originator cannot but be this soul, and it becomes manifold by the manifoldness of its acts which is the body, a manifoldness which, as we said, is by accident. By accidental manifoldness I do not mean a mere relation, nor something which is merely posited by or existing in the mind, but I mean something which will not become clear to you except by what I shall explain to you in the following words:

Since the soul overflows with all realities and all species which exist in the corporeal world, the soul, in its essential unity and simplicity, possesses all those realities. But the existence of those realities and species is not so differentiated and articulated that each of them is distinct from the other in existence. Rather, they exist in the soul in an undifferentiated existence which is identical with the soul's very existence: nothing is distinct from another except by virtue of its reality. So the soul has manifold faces or aspects, according to the manifoldness of realities. Again each aspect has another aspect, nay many different aspects. One of its aspects, for instance, is the reality of growth. This aspect itself has vegetative and animal aspects; and the latter again has the two aspects of speech and speechlessness. From the universal soul in its vegetative, animal, and human aspects, there effuses and springs forth the vegetative, animal, and human reality. The reality of its effusion consists in this: that the soul, in its vegetative, animal, and human aspect, which inhere in it in an undifferentiated manner, by the very acts of human nutrition and growth, that aspect, becomes distinctive and articulated again, in terms of a differentiated existence. After it was distinct in its reality alone, it becomes existent in a differentiated existence. So when the soul turns its face and orients itself essentially to do an act in a predisposed matter, there gushes forth from its essence an effulgent light. This is one of the soul's aspects upon that matter and it is by virtue of that aspect of the soul that there emerges that act in that matter. This is the real manner in which the power of action emanates from the soul. So the species of the soul, as they are distinguished in accordance with the action of the universal soul, are distinguished in terms of their reality, both before and after the action. However, the distinction among the individuals of a single species, is not in terms of action, but in terms of reality. We can elucidate the matter in the following way. When the universal soul executes nutrition and growth in human beings, through

matter ready to receive it, there it obtains multifarious powers which are all one in species. When the universal soul perceives sensations in human beings, different sensations occur in one species, in the matter which is susceptible to receiving them. These faculties (powers) and sensations are the faces of the universal soul, through which it performs all those actions. When it (the universal soul) imagines distinct images with regard to different matters, then it obtains distinct imaginative faculties. When the universal soul intelligizes on the basis of distinct sensations in accord with the distinction of matters, which are different human bodies, there emanates intellects which are one in species. When the universal soul turns its face towards an aspect, i.e. the species of the human soul, they are human actions in multiple matters that are susceptible of receiving them. It then obtains the species of the human soul in numerous persons in accordance with the number of actions which they themselves are dependent upon and the number of the human bodies. If the universal soul, through the instrumentality of the temperamentally different human bodies, performs actions and persists in them, there different dispositions originate, by which diverse human bodies are distinguished. If it is difficult for you to grasp what I said, I will make it easier for you by what I say.

When the soul informs the body, feeling through each of the senses, it gets extremely delighted and pleased, and falls in love with those sensible pleasures, getting immersed in them. She is veiled from the proper limit which she had previously, only insofar as it is an acting principle and insofar as it persists within the context of action. Then when the soul makes another body, the same process is repeated, and so on as we mentioned. This is because all the soul's actions take place outside its essence. To act is to orient oneself outside one's true essence because sensation is the perception of things outside. Imagination is also the perception of things extrinsic to our nature taking place through the medium of sensation, therein disclosing external things to us. Turning the attention outside causes negligence and forgetfulness of one's proper essence. So the universal soul acquires a veil with regard to each body. It is veiled throughout by virtue of being incarnated in individual bodies. Being concealed in this veil makes it incognizant of the other veils, even if the universal soul in itself is cognizant of all the veils. A good example would be the power of vision, which is one single faculty not residing or inhering in matter, as we have explained in the chapter on vision. Nonetheless when you see with one of your two eyes, that eye, insofar as you see through that eye, is unaware of the vision of the other eye, inasmuch as it is not the other eye; otherwise each of the two eyes would be cognizant of the other, notwithstanding the fact that the perceiving soul is well aware of both visions. I brought forth this example in order that you might better visualize the problem. If these premises were concealed from you, that would not impair the issue.

In short, the plurality of souls is due to the yearnings of bodies, the corporeal life, and its delights and pleasures. But it is not the case that the soul does not have

another mode of existence aside from the existence within the bounds of the body and the confines of the bodily pleasures, because if this were so, when we supposed the removal of this amorous configuration there would immediately ensue the removal of the soul. But such is not the case because, at times, the soul in itself oversteps the bounds of the body and the carnal pleasures. And you know that the soul was at first desiderating the body, and now it has an aversion to the body. So the souls inevitably have another mode of existence besides the one immersed in matter and its lustful cravings. It is this mode by which they are able to get rid of those carnal desires and obey the decrees of the intellect.

It became evident from the foregoing that this multiplicity, due to the multiplicity of desiderative configurations, is accidental and not a thing essential for the soul. This is because the persons multiple in essence are eliminated by the elimination of the personal characteristics. When I say that the souls are multiple by accident and one in essence, do not think that I mean your soul. What I purport is the Divine Universal Soul. Indeed your soul is that by which effects and deeds are visible in you; and that whose effects are visible in you is not different from the Universal Soul in all respects. Nay it is the Universal Soul, but as it is confined within the bounds of action, after having fallen by turning its face toward action which is outside the limits of its essence. Here I do not intend to say that the Universal Soul has totally degenerated and has been removed from its proper essence, leaving nothing but that which is within the confines of action, because if that were the case the Universal Soul would perish as a result of action and there would be [many] individual souls, not one single individual soul. This is sheer sophistry.

Pay heed to your soul. Even if attention to one thing hinders it from attention to other things—the act of vision, for instance, impedes it from intellection or imagination—nonetheless one reality integrates them all: you see while you intelligize or imagine, and at times you intelligize or imagine different intelligibles or images together. This is especially true with regard to strong and vigorous souls for which one attention does not impede others. The soul, due to being universal, Divine, and in the extremity of vigour, is such that paying heed to one aspect does not deter it from paying heed to other aspects. So its action in one body and its being engaged in its administration do not impede it from acting in another body. Being engaged in the administration does not hamper it from beholding the beauty of the Reality on high and its Majesty and Glory. It might be that at times the Universal Soul becomes your soul; that is when your soul has gone out of itself and is not impressed by the contingencies of the body and of time, and attains to a state prior to time and temporal existence. Nonetheless the soul does not become identical to the Universal Soul, such that there remains no distinction between them. Rather, it becomes a face among its intrinsic faces; I mean the essential aspect by which the universal soul performs human deeds.

That indeed is the reality of the human soul. Even when different human souls reach such an extremity, the distinction among them is not removed, as God willing you shall come to see later.

Part III

The Qajar Period and the School of Tehran

Introduction

The Qajar period began towards the end of the twelfth/eighteenth century and lasted until 1921 when it was replaced by the Pahlavi dynasty. This period coincided with the political weakening of Persia and the loss of about half of the territory of the country to Russia and the British. And yet, it was an active period philosophically in contrast to what many modern historians, both Western and Persian, have written. Furthermore, the Qajar period was witness to the first encounter in Persia of traditional Islamic thought with modern European philosophy and thought. The basis for all the different intellectual strands of the past 90 years in Persia, during both the Pahlavi period and since the Islamic Republic of Iran was established, was in fact laid during the Qajar period which, for that very reason, is important to study philosophically. Furthermore, this period is significant in itself because it constituted a notable chapter in the history of Islamic philosophy in Persia. Therefore, a better understanding of the intellectual activities of this period is the key to both the general intellectual history of Persia and a deeper comprehension of Persian intellectual life, from metaphysics to political thought, in modern times and more particularly during the almost one century that has passed since the end of the rule of the Qajar dynasty.

Considering the importance of this subject, it is strange that so few scholarly works were devoted to it until recently. In the West one can name but one solitary figure belonging to that period, the French philosopher and diplomat Comte de Gobineau, who wrote a notable monograph on philosophy in Persia including the Qajar period after meeting some Persian philosophers when he was stationed in the French embassy in Tehran during the nineteenth century. E. G. Browne, who also spent a year in Persia in the early twentieth century, made a few oblique references to philosophy in Persia, although, not being an expert in philosophy but a scholar of literature, he made some erroneous remarks that persisted in scholarly circles in the West for a long time.

It remained to the second half of the fourteenth/twentieth century for serious Western scholarship to turn its attention to philosophy in the Qajar era. This task

was achieved first and foremost by Henry Corbin whose interest in and study of Safavid philosophy and the School of Isfahan, with which we have already dealt, naturally led his attention to the Qajar period. And so during the past few decades more and more attention is being paid in the West to this late phase of Islamic philosophy in Persia. This attention has been intensified by the fact that many scholars have realized that in order to understand the intellectual background of Ayatollah Khomeini, they must understand the thought of his teachers, such as the philosopher and gnostic Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī Shāhābādī, all of whom belonged to the late Qajar and early Pahlavi periods.

In Persia itself, although the works of such Qajar masters of philosophy as Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī were and are popular and taught extensively in traditional circles, among the modern educated classes there was little interest in Qajar philosophy until a few decades ago, and few admitted that such a thing even existed except as simple repetitions of what had gone before in earlier centuries. Serious scholarly interest outside of places of traditional learning such as Qom, which was and remains a major centre of traditional *madrasahs* in Persia, began in the 1960s and increased after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Over the years, more and more important philosophical works of the Qajar period have been edited and have seen the light of day and more of its major figures have been studied. As a result, few can now doubt that this period is philosophically significant and worthy of serious study. Yet, there is still much to be done, many texts to be critically edited and studied in depth. But already we have at our disposal many valuable works and a clear enough picture of the main figures of this period to have a good idea of the history of philosophy in the Qajar period although there are still some blank pages that must be filled through further research.

Tehran was chosen by the Qajars as their capital and as they became firmly established, new *madrasahs* were built there and gradually ‘*ulamā*’ were drawn to the new centre. In the early thirteenth/nineteenth century the Qajar king invited the leading philosopher of Isfahan, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, who had revived the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and the School of Isfahan and who was one of Mullā Ṣadrā’s leading commentators, to come to Tehran to teach. He responded to the king that he had many students and could not leave Isfahan. Instead he sent one of his foremost students, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī to the capital. And with this event what we now call the School of Tehran began. Other philosophers from Isfahan such as Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā’ī and Mirzā Abu’l-Ḥasan Jilwah also migrated to the capital as did philosophers from other regions of the country. Soon Tehran became a thriving centre for the teaching of philosophy. *Madrasahs* such as Marwī and the Old Sipahsālār became centres for the study of philosophy which was strongly encouraged by the rulers. The Qajar king Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh would himself sometimes visit these schools and hold discourse with some of the philosophers.

Four figures who came after Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī are considered as the founders (*mu’assis*, literally establisher) of the School of Tehran. They are Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris, the central figure of this School and the son of Mullā ‘Abd Allāh, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī, Mīrzā Abu’l-Ḥasan Jilwah and Mīrzā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī. They are all major thinkers in their own right each with his own distinct philosophical tendencies. Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris is a major original thinker but belonging at the same time to the School of Mullā Ṣadrā. Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī, although a true master of the transcendent philosophy/theosophy (*al-hikmah al-muta‘āliyah*) was primarily a gnostic or ‘*ārīf*, sometimes called ‘the second Ibn ‘Arabī’ and considered to be the foremost master in Persia during the past few centuries of the gnosis of the School of Ibn ‘Arabī as well as being a saint to whom even some supernatural acts of grace (*karāmāt*) are attributed. Mīrzā Abu’l-Ḥasan Jilwah was an Avicennan Peripatetic (*mashshā’ī*) philosopher who criticized some of the theses of Mullā Ṣadrā. Mīrzā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī was also a Ṣadrian philosopher and a major expositor of the transcendent philosophy/theosophy while being also well versed in mathematics.

Those men, along with a few other masters, in turn trained a number of important philosophers who spanned the last part of the Qajar and early Pahlavi periods. This next generation included numerous well-known figures such as Mīrzā Ḥāshim Ashkiwarī, Mullā Muḥammad Hīdājī, Mīrzā Ṭāhir Tunakābunī, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī and even Sayyid Abu’l-Ḥasan Qazwīnī whose long life stretched into the latter part of the Pahlavi period allowing many who are still alive, including myself, to study with him. Although the Pahlavi period is beyond the scope of the time span chosen for our *Anthology*, one needs to add that this tradition has continued in Tehran to this day. Many of the most famous philosophers of this later period were products of the teachers cited above such as another of my teachers, Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm ‘Aṣṣār, and Ayatollah Khomeini. Some of the major philosophers of this latter period were, however, trained in centres other than Tehran such as ‘Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā’ī, called the Renewer (*mujaddid*) of Ṣadrian philosophy in the fourteenth/twentieth century, with whom I also studied some twenty years, who was trained in Tabriz and Najaf in Iraq.

One cannot discuss the School of Tehran without mentioning Sufism and gnosis which exercised a major influence upon philosophy during this period. The revival of Sufism in Persia from the time of Āqā Muḥammad Khān Qajar was certainly influential in making possible the widespread influence of Sufism, esoterism and gnosis among so many Qajar and Pahlavi philosophers. Such gnostics and Sufis as Mullā Ḥusayn Qulī Hamadānī, Mullā Faṭḥ ‘Alī Sulṭānābādī, Baḥr al-‘Ulūm and Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī were also mystical philosophers whose works and ideas must certainly be included in any thorough history of the School of Tehran and the philosophical life of centres in Persia other than Tehran. It is enough to point to the profound influence of Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī Shāhābādī on Ayatollah Khomeini and several masters of gnosis and Sufism upon ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī to realize this truth.

Something must also be said here about other cities in Persia where philosophy was taught and studied. These cities include Shiraz where something of the tradition of the School of Shiraz continued, Kashan from which the Narāqī family hailed, and to some extent Mashhad and Qom, the latter becoming a major centre for the study of Islamic philosophy after the Second World War as a result of the migration of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī to that city. But during the Qajar period the most important centre outside of Tehran was the city of Sabzawar in Khorasan thanks to the presence there of Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī who, along with Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris, is considered as the greatest philosopher of the Qajar period. Thanks to the former, numerous students flocked to Sabzawar and this city became for several decades the most important centre of philosophy after Tehran.

We must now turn to the main subjects with which the philosophers of the Qajar period and the School of Tehran were concerned. In many ways these subjects were similar to those of the School of Isfahan seeing that the Qajar period was witness to a major revival of the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā and was direct heir to the philosophical schools of the Safavid period. Like their Safavid predecessors, the Qajar philosophers were primarily concerned with metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, philosophical cosmology and psychology, eschatology and the interrelation between philosophy and revelation in general and gnosis in particular. And like the School of Isfahan, the School of Tehran did not show much interest in natural philosophy (*ṭabī’iyyāt*) and mathematics (*riyāḍiyyāt*) although some of the philosophers of this period such as Mirzā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī possessed profound knowledge of traditional mathematics and astronomy as did some of the traditional philosophers of the Pahlavi period. The Qajar, very much like the Safavid era, produced significant philosophers comparable to the philosophers of the earlier period but no men such as Ibn Sīnā, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī who are major figures in the history of Islamic sciences as much as they are of Islamic philosophy.

Many of the philosophical works of the Qajar era are concerned with ontology and further debates about the Ṣadrian doctrines of the unity, principiality and gradation of *wujūd* for which some like Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī provided further elucidations, proofs and occasionally criticisms and others like Jilwah sought to refute. There was also much debate about epistemology, again revolving for the most part around the extensive and all-embracing teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā on this subject. The same can be said about philosophical cosmology and psychology. As for eschatology, this was a subject to which much attention was paid in the Qajar period and important works appeared in this field which were not simply repetitions of what we find in Safavid texts. In this as in other fields of philosophy much followed what was asserted and discussed in the School of Isfahan but there were also many new ideas as we see in the works of Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris.

When we come to the relation between philosophy and revelation, while many of the debates about the relation between faith and reason were revisited, new concerns also appeared upon the scene, especially since, while Shi'i *kalām* continued to be eclipsed by philosophy as was explained in volume three of this *Anthology*, this period coincided with the golden age of Shi'i 'Principles', or *uṣūl*, with the appearance of the works of Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī. This religious discipline possesses an important philosophical dimension especially in the field of semantics which became a central concern of much of Western philosophy in the fourteenth/twentieth century. Lack of space has prevented us from including this school in our *Anthology*, but *uṣūl* is certainly of philosophical importance although it is distinct from *falsafah*. One day when the complete history of philosophy in Persia is written, a section should surely be devoted to philosophical semantics found in the science of *uṣūl* as it was developed in the Qajar period.

As far as the interaction between philosophy and gnosis is concerned, it can be said that there was a greater and more widespread interaction between the two in the Qajar than in the Safavid period despite the great influence of Ibn 'Arabī on Mullā Ṣadrā and some of his students. The Qajar period was witness to the appearance of many masters of Ibn 'Arabian and, moreover, specifically Shi'i gnosis (*irfān-i shī'ī*) such as Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, Mullā Ḥusayn Qulī Hamadānī and Baḥr al-'Ulūm the like of whom were not totally absent in the Safavid era but were rarer than what we find in the Qajar period. Moreover, in the latter period we find certain anti-*falsafah* figures such as Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī who were, however, devoted to Shi'i gnosis. This phenomenon, in the form that it took in the thirteenth/nineteenth century, also distinguishes the Qajar from the Safavid period.

The element that most distinguishes the Qajar period and the School of Tehran from the Safavid era and the School of Isfahan, however, is modern Western philosophy that entered Iran for the first time seriously in the thirteenth/nineteenth century. Although Descartes, the father of modern European philosophy, was a contemporary of Mullā Ṣadrā, it was not until the advent of the School of Tehran that a work of the French philosopher was translated into Persian. This book was the *Discourse on Method* that was rendered into Persian in Tehran, a task in which Comte de Gobineau played a role. This work was translated again by Muḥammad 'Alī Furūghī in the early Pahlavi period accompanied by his *Sayr-i ḥikmat dar Urūpā* (History of Philosophy in Europe) that became very popular and is the work responsible more than any other for the introduction of modern European philosophy in Persia. The notable influence of Cartesianism in some parts of the fourteenth/twentieth century philosophical scene in Persia goes back therefore to the Qajar period. During this epoch there were also other philosophical influences from the West such as questions drawn from the philosophy of Kant to which Āqā 'Alī Mudarris provided responses from the point of view of Islamic philosophy in

his *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (Marvels of Wisdom). The full philosophical engagement of traditional Persian philosophers with various currents of European thought as seen in the works of such men as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i and Mīrzā Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī did not, however, take place until the Pahlavi period. The background for such works must, however, still be sought in what took place during the Qajar era.

Before leaving our discussion of the School of Tehran, it is necessary to mention also the question of language. As already pointed out earlier in this *Anthology*, Persian became gradually an important philosophical language from the fifth/eleventh century onward starting with Ibn Sīnā's *Dānish nāma-yi 'alā'i* (The 'Alā'i Book of Science) and early Ismaili writings of such figures as Naṣīr-i Khusraw. From the sixth/twelfth to the ninth/fifteenth centuries the number of significant philosophical works in Persian grew as we see in the works of such philosophers as Suhrawardī, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, among many others, although the usage of Arabic of course also continued. In the Safavid period, however, the number of significant philosophical works in Persian diminished despite a few treatises in the language by Mīr Dāmād, Mīr Findiriskī, Mullā Ṣadrā, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ and others. However, these Safavid texts did not usually possess the literary beauty and lucidity of many of the earlier texts.

In the Qajar period there is a noticeable return to the Persian language in the writing of philosophical texts and many of the philosophers of this period also composed notable poems in Persian as did a few Safavid philosophers. Not only were several major works such as the *Asrār al-ḥikam* (The Mysteries of Wisdom) of Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī and *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (The Marvels of Wisdom) of Āqā 'Alī Mudarris written in Persian, but also some works of the Safavid period especially those of Mullā Ṣadrā, all of whose prose works, except one, are in Arabic and were translated into Persian. Persian as a philosophical language was therefore revived and strengthened at this time and became the basis for the development of contemporary philosophical Persian which then began to expand its vocabulary as more and more foreign philosophical ideas entered the Persian philosophical scene. In speaking of the Qajar period one must not forget its role in the forging of contemporary philosophical Persian even in the writings of those who have no longer been concerned with the Islamic philosophical tradition but have followed one school or another of modern Western thought.

When we planned this five-volume *Anthology*, Dr. Aminrazavi and I decided to end it with the termination of the Qajar period. There were two reasons for this decision. The first reason was that we wanted to keep a historical perspective on a 2,500-year-old tradition and avoid the near contemporary and contemporary periods which in a sense have not as yet receded into history. The second reason was personal. I have been so much engaged with the philosophical life in Persia during the past half-century as a living voice and agent upon the scene, and not only

as a writer and student of its development, that I felt that I was not suited to be the editor of such a volume. But as I have mentioned to my co-editor and others, there is definitely the need for a sixth volume if we are to gain a full picture of the life of philosophy in Persia from the time of the Gathas of Zoroaster to the present day.

During the period ranging from the end of the Qajar period to the present, Persia has remained a centre of philosophical activity in the East. During this time Islamic philosophy has continued its life and has even been revived. Moreover, three major currents of Western philosophy, namely, first of all what we call Continental philosophy including more and more not only the French School but also German philosophy especially the thought of Heidegger, secondly Marxist thought from Marx himself to such figures as Jean-Paul Sartre, and finally, and somewhat later, analytical philosophy and the philosophy of such men as Ludwig Wittgenstein have found many followers in Persia. Many departments of philosophy starting with that of Tehran University have been established in various universities and institutions of higher learning nearly all based on Western models rather than on the Persian tradition. Numerous works of Western philosophy have been translated into Persian including those dealing with political and social thought and numerous critically edited works of Islamic philosophy have seen the light of day. Moreover, many independent philosophical analyses and studies have been written in Persian. All of these activities have affected numerous other fields from religion and theology, to the sciences, humanities and social sciences, to the practical domains of politics and ethics to the arts. Today Persia remains without doubt the most philosophically active country in the Islamic world.

Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī

Nayriz, a small city in the province of Fars in southern Persia, produced many notable scholars, philosophers and Sufis from the Īlkhānid to the Qajar period. Before turning to the subject of this section of the *Anthology* dealing with Quṭb al-Dīn Nayrīzī, who was perhaps the most notable among the thinkers who came from Nayriz, we thought of saying at least a few words about an earlier Nayrīzī whose writings would have been included in this work had there been sufficient space. This figure was Najm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Nayrīzī. We do not know much about the details of his life or even the date of his birth or death except that he was born in Nayriz sometime late in the ninth/fifteenth century and received his earliest education there. Then he went to Shiraz where he studied with Ṣadr al-Dīn and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī. After the murder of Ṣadr al-Dīn, he left Shiraz for Isfahan, Yazd and Gilan and the last date we have for him is 943/1536. Most likely he, too, met a violent death some time after that year.

Najm al-Dīn studied the different Islamic sciences but was especially attracted to philosophy upon which he concentrated. In contrast to many other figures of the School of Shiraz, however, he was not drawn to the cosmological and natural sciences except for astrology. He gained mastery of rational philosophical discourse but was at the same time a mystic, well versed in mystical philosophy. He was also a person of great faith who sought to unify faith and reason. He respected highly Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and Ṭūsī but also Suhrawardī. In fact Najm al-Dīn's works reflect the attempt to synthesize various schools of Islamic thought as we find in the writings of so many figures of the School of Shiraz, especially Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī.

Some 57 philosophical and theological works are known to have been written by Najm al-Dīn. Most of these works are in the form of commentaries and glosses upon famous texts of Islamic thought including *al-Tajrīd* (Catharsis) of Ṭūsī, *Hidāyat al-ḥikmah* (Guide to Philosophy) of Athīr al-Dīn Abharī, *Maṭālī' al-anwār* (The Rising Place of Lights) of Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī, and *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The Theosophy of the Orient of Light), *al-Alwāḥ al-'imādiyyah* (The 'Imadī Tablets)

and *Hayākil al-nūr* (Temples of Light) all of Suhrawardī. But Najm al-Dīn also did write some independent works such as *Risālat ithbāt al-wājib* (Treatise on the Proof of the Necessary Being).

Najm al-Dīn Nayrīzī did not gain as much fame in Persia as some other philosophers of his day but interestingly enough his works were well received and well known in the Ottoman world. Hājji Khalifah, the famous Ottoman bibliographer, mentions him in his famous *Kashf al-zunūn* (Unveiling of Beliefs).

Turning now to Quṭb al-Dīn, we know that his full name was Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī and that he was born in Nayriz in 1100/1689. He was a *sayyid* who traced his lineage through twenty-six generations to Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, the fourth Shi‘i Imam. Quṭb al-Dīn also came from a family that produced several notable philosophers during later centuries. Shihāb al-Dīn Nayrīzī, one of the outstanding philosophers of the late Qajar period, who was the teacher of such philosophical and gnostic luminaries as Mīrzā Aḥmad Āshtiyānī, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī and our own teacher Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm ‘Aṣṣār, was a descendent of Quṭb al-Dīn.

Like Najm al-Dīn, his predecessor from Nayriz, Quṭb al-Dīn received his earliest education in the city of his birth and then came to Shiraz for more advanced study. While there he studied philosophy with several masters, one of his most famous teachers being Shāh Muḥammad Dārābī. Moreover, while in Shiraz, Quṭb al-Dīn was initiated into the Dhahabiyyah Sufi order and became the disciple of the famous Sufi master, Shaykh ‘Alī Naqī Iṣṭahbānātī who trained him spiritually for many years. Quṭb al-Dīn advanced so much upon the Sufi path that in 1129/1717 upon the death of Iṣṭahbānātī he became the supreme pole or *quṭb* of the Dhahabiyyah Order and is considered to this day by members of this order as one of its greatest figures. Quṭb al-Dīn did not devote himself only to the training of souls but also taught philosophy and trained several important philosophers such as Mawlānā Miḥrāb Gilānī and Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī, the well-known gnostic and philosopher who was himself the teacher of such famous Qajar philosophers such as Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī and Hājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī.

Opposition to Sufism in Persia caused Quṭb al-Dīn to migrate to Iraq. While there he taught the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and also jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Moreover, he taught not only Shi‘i jurisprudence but Sunni *fiqh* as well. He remained in Iraq until his death in 1173/1758–59 and was buried in Najaf.

Quṭb al-Dīn’s teachings may be seen as another application of the famous saying, ‘Philosophy derives from the niche of prophecy’, a saying that is fundamental for the understanding of the main tradition of Islamic philosophy as ‘prophetic philosophy’. The central pillar in Quṭb al-Dīn’s understanding of *ḥikmat* is the transcendent unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). In light of his interpretation of this doctrine, he opposed the view of those philosophers for whom *wujūd* is shared by existents (*mawjūdāt*) only linguistically (*ishtirāk lafẓī*) and not in meaning and

reality (*ishtirāk ma' nawī*). He opposed the *mashshā'īs* or Peripatetics for their lack of understanding of the real import of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the *ishrāqīs* or Illuminationists because of their defence of the principality of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*). He also criticized the discursive philosophers for their lack of attention to the necessity of creating accord and harmony between philosophy and the *Shar'ī* sciences and Divine Commands. Being a strong defender of Sufism, he therefore provided a strong response to Mīr Dāmād who had criticized the famous verse of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *pā-yi istidlāliyān chūbīn buwad* (the leg of the rationalists is a wooden leg). Quṭb al-Dīn spoke and wrote as both a *ḥakīm* and a Sufi, but refrained from using in reference to himself the term *ṣūfī* in Persian or Arabic because of the particular socio-political conditions of his time. Rather, he used the word *faqr*, *faqīr* and similar terms.

The works of Quṭb al-Dīn include *Ḥikmat al-ʿarīfīn* (Philosophy [or Wisdom] of the Gnostics), *Kanz al-ḥikmah* (Treasury of Philosophy [or Wisdom]) and *Mizān al-ṣawāb* (The Measure of Good), a selection of which appears below. Quṭb al-Dīn was also a good poet in both Arabic and Persian and expressed much of his most profound teachings in poetry. His works in poetry include *Anwār al-walāyah/wilāyah* (Lights of Sanctity) (in both Arabic and Persian), *Shams al-ḥikmah* (The Sun of Philosophy [or Wisdom]) (in Arabic) and the rendition of the famous Shi'ī prayer *Du'ā-yi ṣabāḥ* (The Prayer of Morning) into Persian poetry. Quṭb al-Dīn also left behind a number of letters (*Maktūbāt*) which are philosophically significant.

Of all the figures included in this *Anthology*, Quṭb al-Dīn is the only one who was the head of a major Sufi order. His inclusion enables us to gain a fuller grasp of the diversity and richness of the various philosophical currents in the Islamic intellectual tradition in Persia.

Here we have translated section nine of *Mizān al-ṣawāb dar sharḥ-i faṣl al-khiṭāb* (The Measure of Good in the Elucidation of the Subject of Rhetoric) which deals with 'Instruction concerning the falsification of the claim of conceptual and linguistic association with respect to the reality of Being and the Realities of the Names of God the Exalted'. The relationship between Divine Names and Attributes, the concept of the Necessary Being and the manner of their conceptual and linguistic association are examined here. The form and style of the treatise owe much to philosophical and mystical poetry. The section ends with Nayrīzī's commentary on how knowledge of the Essence of God is generated degree after degree.

S. H. Nasr

THE MEASURE OF GOOD IN THE ELUCIDATION OF THE SUBJECT
OF RHETORIC

Mizān al-ṣawāb dar sharḥ-i faṣl al-khiṭāb

Translated for this volume by David Bennett from Sayyid Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Nayrīzī, *Mizān al-ṣawāb dar sharḥ-i faṣl al-khiṭāb*, commentary by A. Amīn al-Sharī‘ah Khu‘ī, ed. M. J. Khwājāwī (Tehran, 1383 Sh./2004), vol. 1, pp. 505–521.

*The 9th Taḥmīd:*¹ *Instruction concerning the falsification of the claim of conceptual and linguistic association*² *with respect to the Reality of Being and the Realities of the Names of God the Exalted.*

9th *Taḥmīd*: Instruction concerning the error of supposing that, with respect to the Reality of Being and the other Realities of the Divine Attributes and Names, there can be any association whatsoever between the Exalted Necessary and the possible beings, including the supposition of linguistic or conceptual association; also, concerning the ascription of Being and the remaining Attributes and Names to the Exalted True and to the possible beings: it is according to the methods of reality and metaphor³ and not in the manner of conceptual or linguistic association.

*Praise to you, Whose Being is not fittingly ascribed,
To His Exalted Essence in an associative manner;
The concept of Being is not equivocal,
And neither are the praiseworthy Attributes of Perfection.*

You rightly praise by truly ascribing the term ‘Being’ to His Sacred Essence without linguistic or conceptual association. The concept of ‘Being’ and the remaining

1. Translator’s note: Literally meaning, ‘praising’, a formal term indicating the sections in Nayrīzī’s text. I am not sure if the poem upon which Nayrīzī is commenting is divided into *taḥmīds*, or if this is Nayrīzī’s designation. *Taḥmīd* or ‘praising’, is a formal designation. The Arabic poetic lines (introduced in the text with ‘...he said, *qaddasa sirrahū*’, a standard expression of respect afforded saints; I have omitted it in the translation) are given indented and in italics; the rest is Nayrīzī’s commentary. Whenever Arabic appears in the (commentary) text, I have italicized the English rendition. Conversely, the occasional Persian poetic lines (included by Nayrīzī) are indented, but not italicized. Terms specifically denoting God have been given capital initial letters in order to avoid ambiguity: thus, ‘the Being of the Exalted Necessary’, etc.

2. *Ishtirāk*: literally, ‘sharing’; the heresy of associating any thing with God (also, *shirk*). As a logical term, it is translated ‘homonymy’; in this text, ‘linguistic association’, i.e., homonymy, is only one of two types of association. Whenever ‘association’, ‘shared’, or ‘partnership’ appears in the text, it is with this pejorative sense.

3. *Ṭarīq-i ḥaqīqat wa-majāz*: two types of predication—according to the former, a thing really has its predicated quality; according to the latter, it has the quality metaphorically speaking.

concepts of His Names and sacred Attributes cannot be shared or equivocal. Know that there are two types of association: linguistic and conceptual. The explanation of linguistic association is that one term may be used with numerous meanings. For example, the term '*ayn*' may be used with sixty different meanings; so it is with the term *shīr*, for example, which may be used in the language with two different realities to express a fierce animal or milk. This is linguistic association. The explanation of the second type, conceptual association, is that a term may be used for one meaning while that meaning is a universal reality, composed of numerous individuals. Thus the truth of that term when applied to each of numerous individuals is according to conceptual association. For example, the term 'man' is used with respect to the universal reality of humanity; therefore, what is true for that reality will be true for all the individuals [belonging to it].

Now that this is understood, we may continue: the masters of philosophy and their followers among the Islamic masters² have supposed that the concept of Being and the perfective Attributes and the Beautiful Divine Names display conceptual association. They consider there to be an individual conceptual commonality belonging to all these universal concepts, [shared] between the Necessary Exalted and the possible beings. They do this in order to consider the Necessary Being to be the most perfect of individuals ('*none more perfect than He*'). As a result, they consider being to be divisible: first, into necessary and possible; the possible is divided into substance and accident, and substance into soul, intellect, prime matter, form, and body. Body is divided into the mathematical and natural types. In this way, they have encountered insoluble difficulties along the lines of association,³ limitation and enumeration. They consider the Exalted Necessary to be an individual iteration of this universal concept when they say that it is a numerical unit, just as was previously explained.

Some of them recognized the difficulty of these problems and, trying to disassociate themselves from association, limitation and enumeration, [developed a technique] called linguistic association. But the conviction of the theological authorities and Divine sages is that any kind of association—linguistic or conceptual—leads to error. Rather, they consider these concepts as validly applicable to the Being and the Attributes of the Exalted Necessary in a real way, and in another way, to wit, by means of metaphor. But 'real' and 'metaphorical' are not logical terms. Rather, 'real' and 'metaphorical' have the meaning by which they are validly ascribed to the Exalted Necessary according to the reality of Being with Essence, and to everything else according to the 'being by relation' of the illumination of the

1. This is the classical Arabic example of homonymy: '*ayn*' means, among other things, eye, spring, etc.

2. i.e. The philosophers and the theologians.

3. *Shirk*, generally meaning 'polytheism', but technically a term denoting the heresy of associating other hypostases with God.

shadowy,¹ just as we have discussed in the previous *taḥmīds*. So the saint² compiled [this text] about the errors attendant upon the supposition of association, be it linguistic or conceptual.

*Just as there is no thing which is a partner to His Essence,
In the pre-eternities before creation,
So there is the concept 'He alone has no partner',
For all eternities, in every generation.*

Just as there has never been any partner—neither linguistic nor conceptual—to the Sacred Essence of the Exalted Necessary in terms of His Being, the Realities of the Names, or the Attributes at any time before the creation and generation of the possible beings, so too, ‘*He alone has no partner*’, and is singular and without a comparable entity unto endless eternity, in every generation of generated and corruptible things. For, if there were to be a partner to the Exalted Real in His Being and Attributes, then He could not be singular and without a comparable entity and One without partner. So the requirement of unity and singularity and partlessness of Him is such that not a single one of the concepts of [His] Being and the Names and the Attributes can have a partner or a similar entity.

*Being is not said equivocally with the perfections of His Essence,
When it is expressed with insight.
For the Being of the Real is such that there is not like it
Any being, self-sufficient in its essence, with that Everlastingness [peculiar to Him].*

So, in the view of those who possess insight, the concept of Being and all the Essential Perfections and Divine Names cannot be uttered in an associative or equivocal manner, just as the Exalted Lord said, ‘*There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him; He is the Hearer and the Seer*’ (42:11). The Reality of Being and the Realities of the Divine Attributes are peculiar only to the Essence, which is of the most sublime of degrees; they cannot be attributed in the real way to anything besides Him, except in the manner of relation and Illuminationist metaphor.

*That which is non-existent in essence in pre-eternity,³
Is not like His creation or the originated things,
Though it may seem, in moments of vision, that it
Has become existent in the real sense.*

1. That is, the *ishrāqī* method.
2. i.e. The author of the text upon which Nayrīzī is commenting.
3. As will be seen in the commentary below, such ‘non-existent’ things are e.g. the Will of God.

That which is essentially non-existent, like the [Act of] Creation and Will of the Exalted True, and the created things generated by Him in pre-eternity, were not with the Exalted True in such a manner that the Reality of Existence and the Realities of the Attributions and the Perfections of the Exalted Creator would be associative or equivocal. Yet, visible being in the visible worlds, after coming-to-be in the visible and apparent [realm], has appearance without having being—in this way it appears that such things are existents in reality. But those possessing inspiration, who behold with insight and spiritual vision, see that the possible beings and the worlds of existent entities have only an appearance which is without material or real being. For it is just as the Exalted True said: ‘*Like a mirage in the desert which the thirsty man reckons [to be water]*’ (24:39), that is, it is like a mirage that appears to be waves of water from a distance; viewed by a thirsty man, it has appearance without existence. When it arrives close at hand, each reflection will be seen to be nothing but a useless desert waste, never having had reality or materiality.

*As for the Attributes of Essence, the Essence of His Being
Is exalted beyond limitation or the illusion of multiplicity.
As for the Attributes of Action, they occur through Him;
Their validation is their illuminating through illuminative emanation.*

He is saying: the Essential Attributes of the Exalted Real are the same as the Sacred Essence which is sacred, undiluted Being. For the Exalted Lord is exalted and higher than that which is conceived of having limitation and multiplicity. Indeed, if the Attributes were not the same as the Essence, it would be necessary that the Sacred Essence be composite; yet every composite will necessarily be limited, even if only limited intellectually (i.e. in the mind of the observer). By the proposition that every possible being is made of a composite pairing,¹ composition will be a concomitant of possibility; yet this is prohibited for the Necessary Exalted. Secondly, it would be necessary that the Sacred Essence be the originator of the multitude of Attributes and would thereby be the starting-point for a multiplicity of pre-eternal things—which is impossible. In sum, there is no doubt that the Essential Attributes of the Exalted Necessary do not have the nature of being added to the Essence; rather the entirety of the Sublime and Beautiful Perfections are essentially required for the Perfect Being of the Eternal True. The Being of the Eternal True is in Its Essence the starting-point of all perfections, but not through the mediation of attributes superadded to the Essence: elaboration of this problem was given in the third *tahmīd*.

As for the Attributes of Action, all of them are originated and subsistent through the Eternal Real. The Active Attributes, insofar as they are concepts and ideas, are diverse. But insofar as they are external referents, they are unified,

1. *Zawj*, i.e. the pairing of existence and essence.

because it is the verification of all that is by way of illuminations and emanations of the Exalted Creator, like Will, Volition, Origination, Creating and Sustaining, Death-Dealing and Life-Giving and the like. All of these attributes are attributes of the Creator-in-Act and the creation of the Dweller and the Light of Emanation of the Exalted Creator. What is meant by all of these manifold terms is the same as the Light of the Will which is the expression of the manifestation of the permanent presence of the Exalted Creator. By another mode of expression, just as the source of all the Essential Attributes is the necessity of the Eternal True Being, so the source of all the relational Active Attributes is also the same Relational Being;¹ Vast Mercy and Compassion are expressions from the Light of Relational Being and the Vast Mercy and the Sacred Light of the Magnificence of the Exalted Creator.

*His Names are His glory, originating as
Manifestations of the perfections of the Praiseworthy Attributes;
They do not have an essence, a self-contained Being,
That you could reckon to have some essence by pointing it out.²*

The Sacred and Beautiful Divine Names are all originated and created through manifestations of the Perfect Attributes of the Exalted Creator. This is because each of the Sacred Names is a locus of creaturely manifestation of one of the Sacred Divine Attributes. There is related in the *Kāfī*³ an episode involving Imam Abū Ja'far II (Jawād) in which someone asked him about the Names and Attributes of the Exalted Creator, whether they themselves were the Exalted Real or not? He said in reply, 'What you have said can be interpreted in two ways. You are saying that the Names and Attributes themselves are the Exalted Real—[perhaps] you mean by that that the Exalted Real can be enumerated and is thereby a site of multiplicity, but God is exalted beyond that. If your intention is that the representations and the glorifications [i.e. the Names themselves] and the very letters spelling them are eternally pre-existent, well, God forbid that there be anything eternally pre-existent with the Exalted Lord.'⁴ Rather, He is the Exalted Real, and has not the condition of a creature. Thus He created those Names and Attributes as a medium between Himself and the created things themselves, such that supplication and lamentation unto Him can be done through them, and worship can take place. So the Sacred

1. Relational being is the mode of metaphorical being attributed by Illuminationists to possible beings. The distinction here is between Essential Attribute which are not separate from God and 'relational active attributes,' which proceed from a fount of relational being, for they have not the essential and eternal quality of the Essential Attributes.

2. *Ishārah*—pointing (something) out or indicating (something). This term requires the mental distinction of parts in an object.

3. Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, one of the 'Four Books' of Shi'ism.

4. It is not entirely clear if the citation ends here or continues.

Names of the Exalted Lord are not essential or independent beings lest you imagine that they are in company and associated with the Sacred Essence. With respect to the Being of the Eternal Real, it is capable of being indicated by sensation or by intellect.

*All of the contents of the worlds are emanated:
There is no being which is self-sufficient in principle [besides God].
Substances do not waft as fragrances from
Being—nor is there anything about them that they may be considered in association
[with God].*

As for all of the worlds of existence, all of them are emanated by the emanation of the Light of the Perfective Will of the Exalted Creator; not one of the higher and lower existents, or the celestial or angelic souls, are self-sufficient¹ such that through their self-sufficiency they are in principle and essentially a being. All of them are subsistent through the Sacred Being of the Eternal Real. It is on account of the Illuminations of the Sun of the Divine Will that possible substances, by means of illuminated shadowy being,² don the garb of being and the clothes of existence. If we consider possible substances *per se* without considering the Divine Emanations, we see that the scent of being and the fragrance of existence never arise with their scent such that one could imagine any sharing or companionship between the relational being of possible beings and the Being of the Eternal Real.

His saying '*substances do not waft as fragrances*' is directed at a doctrine propounded by a group of gnostics³ who said: '*the permanent substances*⁴ *do not*⁵ *emit the 'scent' of being; they are the names by which you and your fathers have called them, but God has not revealed His Power through them. For, the injunction 'do not follow any injunction but God's' is the true religion. But most people do not know this.*' Another group said: '*the world is concealed and was never revealed, whereas the Exalted Real is manifest and was never hidden.*' In this matter, the people are totally wrong when they say: '*the world is manifest and the Exalted Real is hidden.*' With this view, with the requirement of these doctrines, they are all slaves of similitude;⁶ but God has cured some of His believers of this disease.

1. Lit., 'rich' (*ghani*).

2. This describes the manner of Illuminationist emanation.

3. 'Arifin.

4. That is, self-subsistent entities of the intelligible world, elements of Neoplatonic cosmology.

5. This and the following negative (*mā*) may be intended as relative pronoun, in which case the doctrine would be: 'permanent substances *are what* emit the 'scent' of being... God *has* revealed His Power through them.' This rendering may be better, insofar as it supposed to be corrected by Nayrizi's text.

6. '*abid li'l-sawā*': it is unclear what this condition is.

It is by ripping asunder the veil that it can become known,
That the friends [of God] worship someone else.¹

O my dear! There are many views, and the ranks of faith are different; *people have their different ways of loving*. [But He² is] the Knower of every known thing He looks at insofar as the known things are in Him, and a Lover of every right view: He is manifest as Beloved in this view. But man is ignorant and without insight regarding this unquestionably wonderful source.

Your adversaries believe the world as a whole to be manifest,
But in the eyes of Your lover, nothing in the world but You is apparent.³

The Imam said: *'I did not see anything without seeing God before it, after it, and with it.'*

The heart that perceives Light and Purity out of knowledge—
With everything it perceives, it perceives God first.
From the deception of a painting, one cannot see the brush of the painter,
Unless with this rusty roof there is One Who acts.⁴

For the Real Being is a real thing,
With essential, eternal thingness,⁵
Real, Sacred and Everlasting;
Its reality is the everlastingness of all reality.

Just as the saying of Ṣādiq⁶ went: 'a thing apart from things—I refer back to the establishment of the concept: His Glory is a Thing with the reality of thingness.'

For the Being of the Real is a thing with the reality of thingness—it is an existent with the reality of Being and Existence. His thingness is an essential and eternal thingness, a reality which is real, sacred and everlasting, which is a thing essentially and an existent essentially—or rather, it is Being essentially, and Self-sufficient, essentially. He is a Reality in that His Reality is Exalted; its Magnificence is the everlasting sustenance of all realities and That Which gives essence to all essences. Just as in the story of the heretic related above from the *Kāfī* who asked Ṣādiq whether the Exalted True is a thing or not, the Imam replied, 'He is a thing but

1. This is a Persian verse.

2. i.e., God.

3. Another Persian verse.

4. Another Persian verse.

5. *shay'yyah*, the quality of being a 'thing'.

6. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Imam. Here and in most of the rest of the commentary, Nayrīzī adds citations of imamate authority in Arabic to the verses receiving commentary.

not like things; I refer back to 'thing' said with the correctly-established meaning, that is, that the Truth of His Glory is a thing with real thingness.' The gist of what he was saying is what I said before: the Exalted Lord is a thing, but you must not imagine that His thingness is like that of the other things in reality. The source of this doctrine is that God is a fixed concept, and thereby a thing with the reality of thingness but not like any other existing thing.

*He has willed things such that their essence is not
A thing except insofar as He willed it by Will.
His Will is not a thing on account of its essence,
Rather, it is a thing through Him out of necessity;
His Will is not a second being that can be indicated
Separate from His Exalted Essence.*

The Exalted Lord wills things in a state which is essential such that they do not have thingness unless the Exalted Real proclaims that their thingness is a thing. His own Will is also not essentially a thing, but rather the thingness of His Being; His Actualization, also, is through the Sacred Being of the Exalted Creator, just as in the *ḥadīth*, 'God created Will through Himself, and created the things through the Will'. The declaration of both intentions is mentioned, so it is known that neither 'thingness' nor 'Will', which are used to express things with respect to the Perfect Being of the Exalted Creator, are real or fundamental.

*So how are the volitions which are generated through it [i.e., His Will]
Associated with Him in the minds of observers, at first glance,
While not being essences subsistent in themselves,
Such that you can claim them [to be] in a secondary degree?
He is their sustainer eternally;
They have no being except through Him, spontaneously.
Since they are not existent with Him,
They do not exist in the judgment of calm minds.*

[The Divine] Will Itself, with respect to the Sacred Divine Being, is judged to be non-existent. So for willed things, which only have the thingness of their being with the Divine Will, how can they share in and be like unto the Sacred Eternal Being, such that association may be supposed to obtain between them? They themselves are not essences or realities self-subsistent by will such that you may suppose that they themselves have will of a secondary degree in being. Rather Will Itself is eternally the subsisting force for all things, and Will is also subsistent through the Eternal Sacred Being. So things and possible beings, from the perspective of the True Being, are not beings at all; 'existent' can never be homonymous

with 'non-existent', [any more than] 'remaining' may be concomitant with the 'annihilation' of the form. The conceptual association of the Exalted Necessary with the possible cannot be possible, just as will and subsistence and the subsisting of things is through the Light of Will. Thus, the being and the subsistence and the subsisting of will are also through the Sacred Being of the Exalted Creator; and thus, Will cannot be in communion and partnership with Him.

*He does not have a second associating with Him,
And all of creation, emanated, does not compare to Him.
They must indicate Him numerically,
Separate from His creation in knowledge:
At that moment, He is distinguished in their minds
From signified generated possible beings,
As an existent thing composed of His Essence
Through Him and through what in Him is associated with reality:
So they must divide Him in glorifying His nature
As Exalted, even if it is an illusion according to a judgment of necessity.*

He is saying: the True Eternal Being has no second, and emanated possible beings can have no communion or comparison with Him. For, if there is any aspect of sharing between the Necessary Being and possible beings, or if they are enumerated with Him in any way upon the distinguishing of Him from creation, it would be necessary that He be picked out by separation and external distinction—just as the necessity of unity implies numerical and particular individuality. So, then, it is inevitable that the specification of the Exalted Creator, in the foolish minds of creatures, be distinguished from the originated possible beings through an existent thing which itself is distinguished from each common reality. For, the non-existent thing, whenever it is specified, cannot be an existent thing, in this form, in essence; it must be composed of what it is in common with and what it is specified by. In that case, the Necessary Being would be taken to be divisible into parts and particular location, taken equivocally—yet this concept itself is, by agreement, erroneous and false.

For he [‘Alī] said at the end of the Ḥadīth al-‘arābī: ‘God our Lord is a singular concept—that is, He is not divisible in being, in intellect, or in estimation; thereby He is our Lord.’

Just as the Leader of Believers said at the end of the Ḥadīth al-‘arābī concerning the concept of the One: even if someone says, the Exalted Lord is a singular concept (that is, ‘One’ is applied to Him), with this concept it [must be] shown that the Exalted Lord cannot be divisible into parts, neither in Being nor intellect nor estimation: just so is the Exalted Lord. This is an unequivocal attribution, that the Sacred Essence of the Necessary cannot be composite or divided, but rather is

One in every way, according to intellect and estimation, and all the external and internal senses.

*Yet all generated things are, in their essence, in need of
The Most Holy in His Everlastingness,
Such that all of the creatures turn to Him seeking
His emanations at every moment.*

He is saying, know [that] all the generated possible beings are essentially in need of the Sacred Essence, whereas He Who lacks nothing is the Presence, marvellous in His Attributes, sublime in His Nature. From Him, created things supplicate His Sacred Emanations in every moment, all the time—for the emanations overflow from the Source unrestrictedly—constantly undergoing renewal, in [a state of] donning and pulling off the garb [of being]. Just as the Exalted Real said: ‘Yet they are in confusion¹ about a new creation’ (50:15).

*The concept of their need, in their being, for God
Is enough of a proof for you for the denial of partnership:
What is not essentially is not shared
With the Essence of the Real Being in His Everlastingness.*

This poverty and need in the being of all the generated and created things for the Essence of the Sacred Necessary—for the establishment of a demonstration, it is sufficient to go with the negation of association between the Necessary and the possible beings. For the being which is essentially and fundamentally never with essential being or essential self-sufficiency cannot be associated with the Real One Who lacks nothing. There can be no equivalence between being and non-being, existence and non-existence, remaining and annihilation, sufficiency and poverty.

*Being will ever be exalted beyond
The poor generated possible beings;
So, too, His Nature is exalted beyond any partner unto Him,
In terms of the Perfections of the Praiseworthy Attributes.
For the Perfections of the Attributes are all
Natures of the Real Being, without like.*

The Being of the Real is always exalted and higher than the manifold possible beings and poor generated things who share with Him in their being. In the same

1. *Labsin*—same root as *labs*, clothes. There is some word-play in Nayrizi’s text when he uses *khal’* (pulling-off of clothes) together with *labs*, dressing, above. In the Persian paraphrase of 50.15 (which follows the Arabic directly), he uses *shubhah* for ‘confusion.’

way, it is exalted and higher than that which may be an associate and a partner of His Own Attributes and Sacred Perfections. For, all the perfections and Sacred Attributes are among the Natures of the Sacred Essence and Being, and the Being of the Real is essentially required for all the perfections of Existence. For the requirement of perfection and completeness of the Sacred Being is the possessing of all perfections. So too there is no partnership in Being, nor in the Perfect Attributes which are the same as the Sacred Being. Association cannot be possible.

*All of them are unified as realities,
With Him eternally, not through association with creation.
He is the Real Existent Who is not from non-existence,
Nor from generation, but rather is, essentially and eternally.*

Just as he said in a sermon:¹ 'He is Existing not from generation; He is Existent not from non-existence.'

The Eternal Sacred Essence has singularity; for the concept of all the Realities of the Names and Attributes is eternally true only for Him. But this is not so in the sense of association with creatures; rather the completeness of His Perfections is incumbent upon the Essence of His Sacred Singular Being. He is the Existing Reality, but an Existent Which is not from non-existence; he is that kind of Real Existent Who was not generated into being. Rather His Existence and Being is essentially eternal and endless itself. Just as the preceding excerpt from the sermon of the lord of lords went: 'He is existing but not from generation; He is the Existent but not from non-existence.' This is in contrast to the creatures and possible beings which are all existing from generation and existent from non-existence. So it is known that for generated creatures there is never any association possible with the Exalted Eternal with respect to His Eternal Attributes, just as there can be no possible being identical in essence to the Sacred Essence without necessitating priority of a thing to itself.

*He is sanctified beyond what is from generation.
Do you reckon such things² to be with His Eternal Essence?
He is far above what is from non-existence;
He has no second in any way.*

He is held to be sanctified and far above existents which come from non-existence—how could you consider a generated thing to be with the Eternal Essence? He is far above and superior to that which comes into being from non-existence.

1. From here on, this is a common formulation: Nayrīzī is citing canonical (*Imāmī*) authorities (usually 'Ali, but not always identified).

2. That is, the Attributes.

So it can never be possible that a second which proceeds from non-existence be postulated for Him by foolish minds and weak imaginings.

*How amazing is their blasphemy¹ when they give Him a partner,
Which is an existent from non-existence,
Such that they [imagine] His Beautiful Names associated in consensus
With His Being, like the consensus of the companions;²
This requires that they limit Him by individuation;
The imagination indicates Him in an associative manner.*

He [‘Alī] said in the Du‘ā’ ḥirz al-yamānī:³ ‘imaginings⁴ do not penetrate hidden veils. For then one would have to believe You to be a limited thing in Your Magnificence, with no quality for Your eternity; yet there is no possible being in Your Everlastingness.’

How amazing is the blasphemy of the Muslim philosophers and their followers!⁵ For they imagine that Being has a single, common meaning, and consider the generations of existents out of non-existence to be partners of the Eternal, like the consensus of the companions of old! That is, they are in agreement that conceptual association [obtains between] the Sacred Being and the concepts of the Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes. But this is the foundation of falsehood and the basis of error, erected and made lofty. [These] people are prisoners of manifest and hidden blasphemy, and both lead to deception and deviation. For that is the foundation of association: they must limit the Sacred Essence of the Necessary through individualities and specifications. Each non-existent is not without individuation and limitedness, just as the Imam himself said: ‘*whoever has limited Him has enumerated Him, and whoever has enumerated Him has nullified His eternity.*’ For a thing which cannot be limited or individuated cannot be enumerated.

So supposing numerical and individual conceptual association for Being and the remaining Perfect Attributes of the Exalted Necessary requires individuation and limitation. This issue was previously addressed in the *Du‘ā’ ḥirz al-yamānī* where it was said, ‘*imaginings do not pierce...*’ That is, the claws⁶ of imaginings do not tear the veil of the Hidden, the Veil of Your Glory, such that there may be limitation of your Magnificence and Greatness; nor is there a quality in Your Eternality,

1. Literary, their *shirk*.

2. The *ahl al-saqifah*, the Companions of the Prophet: this being the image of perfect consensus, potentially appropriate for (the philosophical) notion of Attributes arranged in perfect consensus with God.

3. Canonical Shi‘i invocation.

4. *Awhām*: I have translated as ‘imaginings’ in order to preserve the pejorative treatment of such suppositions.

5. Reading *mutābī‘īn*.

6. Lit.; *sar-panjah*.

nor any possibility in Your Eternal Being which could be professed. He also says, 'Whoever has pointed Him out has limited Him, and whoever has limited Him has enumerated Him, and whoever has enumerated Him has nullified His eternity.' Also, 'Whoever has limited Him has so fashioned Him; whoever represents Him does not correctly strike upon His Reality.' That is, anyone who would point Him out has made Him limited; whoever has limited Him has enumerated Him; and anyone who has enumerated Him has nullified His Eternal Being. Also, His Uniqueness is not known by one who imagines a quality for Him; His Reality is not arrived at by one who supposes something resembles Him.

*His 'second' is non-existent, for there may be no Necessary,
Nor any possible, with His Unique Essence.
There is no separation¹ between the Real in [His] Eternality
And all the indicated generated things
Such that limitation would be required in order to
Distinguish Him with numerical unity.*

In His Majesty He does not have superiority over anything such that He can be diminished by the limitation of being indicated, like what [was said] in the sermon: 'Whoever picks Him out has limited Him, and whoever has limited Him has enumerated Him, and whoever has enumerated Him has nullified His eternity.' Thus it was said in a sermon of his: '[He is not]² Existing after not existing, so that the generated attributes conform to Him. There is no separation between them and Him, and He doesn't have superiority over them; the Producer and the produced are equivalent, the Creator and the created are equal.'

The Exalted Lord cannot have a second, for, at the rank of the Most Hidden and His Eternal Essence,³ Necessary and possible cannot exist with the Unique Essence; and there is no separation between the Exalted Real in [His] Eternality and the Perfect Generated [Attributes]. For [such a] separation is not possible except through time, and the Sacred Essence is beyond and above time and temporality. Rather, time is a necessity of the lower worlds of being, determined by the celestial bodies. So the Exalted Real cannot have a second, whether necessary or possible, lest limitation and enumeration be necessitated. Thus the Exalted Necessary has no superiority over the generated and the possible beings such that possible beings, from the standpoint of the Sacred Being of the Necessary, may be noted and pointed out with respect to Him. For, superiority is a type of similarity and comparison, and similarity and comparison between Being and non-being can never be admitted.

1. *Faṣl*.

2. This is not negated in the text, but is negated in the commentary below.

3. *Huwiyyat*.

Just as in the sermon it was said: 'Whoever indicates any equal to the Sacred Essence in any way has limited Him, and whoever limits Him demonstrates His enumeration, and anyone who considers Him enumerated nullifies His eternality.' In another sermon, he says: 'It should not be said of the Exalted Necessary that He exists after that which does not exist, such that the generated attributes may be applied to Him. There is no separation between Him and the generated possible beings; He is not separate from them such that there is parity between the Producer and the produced, and equality posited between the Creator and the created.

*They don't have any excellence¹ on account of their essences,
Such that you could reckon any excellence with respect to them,
Such that preference require His limitation,
Upon the positing of associations of perfection at any moment,
Such that they also have excellences and are thereby equivalent:
For then His productions would be in association [with Him].*

Generated and possible beings have an excellence and an elevation in accordance with their essences such that you can calculate them and compare them to the Excellence and Sacred Perfections of the Exalted Real. The Exalted Real cannot be given preference over the possible beings since preference entails limitation of the Exalted Real. That is, an instance could be conceived of where the possible and the Necessary Exalted were in association with respect to the characteristic of preference and the Perfections, for preference is posited between two things. The case in which the preferred and that over which it is preferred may both be considered associated in terms of preference is such that one of them is posited to be preferred over the other. For example, if Zayd is preferred over 'Amr, then it is correct that both Zayd and 'Amr are associated with respect to preference, but the excellence of Zayd is in excess of the excellence of 'Amr. But if 'Amr had no excellence or commonality with Zayd, in this case there could not be any sound comparison between them.

The same concept is intimated when he says that the need for the preference of the Exalted Real over the worlds of possible beings consists in that the possible beings also have excellences and perfections essentially, such that between the preferred and that over which it is preferred, there may be sound comparison; so it would be necessary that the Exalted Real and the produced things themselves be equivalent in commonality and excellence. But generated and possible beings have the defect of possibility, the need for generation, and are perishable and have non-being; they have no excellence or excess. So comparison between the Exalted Necessary and the possible beings is never sound; equality and similarity between

1. *Faḍl*.

the Existent and the non-existent, the Essentially Remaining and the essentially perishable—how can it be conceived such that it can be said that the Exalted Lord is superior to them?

*The Real Being is Exalted; God is greater
Than the attributes and the attribution of creation.¹*

Just as was related in al-Kāfī from Abū ‘Abd Allāh that when a man said to him, ‘God is greater’;² he replied, ‘God is greater than what thing?’ The man replied, ‘than every thing...’

The Being of the Eternal Real is exalted and higher than the generated and possible beings, than any association with them in terms of being and perfections. He is greater than the attributions of creatures. It is just as in the *Kāfī* it was related that someone in attendance to Ṣādiq said, ‘God is greater’; whereupon he responded, ‘if you say that the Exalted Lord is greater, what is He greater than?’ That is, by applying ‘greater’-being to the Exalted Lord, you are forming a preference over what? The man proposed, ‘He is greater than any thing.’ The saint replied, ‘if by that you intend that in any respect the Exalted Real is limited, then the result of that proposition is that, since you want the Exalted Real to be preferred over possible beings in terms of the attribute of greatness, it will be necessary that both share in the attribute of greatness, such that the preference be valid. In that sense, there will be commonality between the Necessary and the possible in terms of an attribute and an aspect, thereby necessitating His limitation.’ The man asked, ‘how must it be said, then?’ The saint said, ‘say, God is greater than being described.’ That is, the Exalted Lord is greater than the attribution of creatures.

*The concept of Being is not equivocal,
As they claimed on account of their weak intellects;
So it is with the Attributes of Perfection, for they
Are sanctified beyond any limitation by indication.*

Just as he said: ‘His description is not limited by limitation; it has no moment that can be numbered, nor any time that is extended.’

So, too, with the concept of Being: there can be no equivocation between the Necessary and the possible, as the philosophers and their followers believe, according to the fancies of weak imaginings. And in the same way, this [rule applies to] the concepts of the Perfect Attributes of the Exalted Creator. For the Sacred Being and the Divine Perfections are pure and exempt from limitation through the

1. That is, attribution as a function specific to created things.
2. i.e., *Allāhu akbar*.

indications of minds or the assessment of imaginings. As ‘Alī said in his sublime sermon: ‘The Omnipotent is such that His Sacred Attributes are not limited by a limit, nor are they made temporal by extension [in time], nor do they admit of any time or period which is extended.’

*There is no real superiority, according to the foremost intellects,
Equal to His Superiority: this is known in every generation.
Yet how delightful is the creative light of Being which is equivocal
In terms of the vast Mercy and Compassion of His Essence!
There are degrees, and Being is the loftiest:
It is as it has been in all eternity.*

He said: ‘If it were said that actual being were the interpretation of the eternity of Being, God said, “God elevates those who believe and those who are suited for knowledge by degrees” (58:11). And God said, “the loftiest of degrees is the Possessor of the Throne” (40:15).’

He is saying that thus it is known that in reality, according to the companions of intellect and insight, there is not a superior [entity] besides the superiority of the Exalted Creator, which is known in every existing generation. It is also known that the Sacred Being and the Sacred Perfections cannot be equivocal or associated, indeed! The light of creation of the Being of the Eternal Real, which is expressed as His vast Mercy and Compassion, is equivocal, and it has different degrees and ranks such that the Exalted Real Himself is called the loftiest of the degrees. So the degrees of being are with respect to relational being; the Merciful Compassionate One is such that the five¹ degrees and the Divine Presences are manifest from Him.

It must be known that all the worlds and Presences and relational beings are related to each other as shadows of one another, and are distinguished from one another by means of shells and kernels. For each world is related to that above it as a shadow and a shell, and to that below it as a kernel, just as it was illustrated with the image of a mirror. In sum, the degrees of creation and relational beings are different, and the Sacred Being of the Eternal Real is the highest of the degrees and worlds, such that it is called the world of His Essence² and of Him-There.³ He never has difference or change; rather He was and ever will be Union.

Just as ‘Alī said in the *Wasīlah Sermon*: ‘If it is said that Actual Being is an interpretation of the Eternity of Being’, that is, if ‘Being’ is said to be the interpretation of the eternity of Being, and the Exalted Lord is indicated as different from the degrees of beings, and the Exalted Lord is made sublime by people who are faithful and people who have been given knowledge with respect to the degrees to each

1. The ‘five’ degrees are not enumerated specifically in this text.

2. *Huwiyyat*.

3. *Hā-huwa*.

other—[in that case,] the intention of the people of knowledge, the Imams, is that the highest of ranks of relational beings is the expression of the world of Divinity and the light of will and the Muḥammadan Reality, and they are correct. As he said: *'The first thing God created was the luminous, and the holy prophets and saints and regents—all from rays of sacred light they were created.'* Thus He said: *'God elevates those who believe and those who are suited for knowledge by degrees'* (58:11). For those are they who, in an apparent or a hidden way, are ascending in rank to a sublime degree over the remaining existents.

It is also said that *'the highest of degrees is the Possessor of the Throne'* (40:15). Thus, intended by the degrees are the ranks of relational beings and the Merciful Compassionate, and the Being of the Eternal Real is the highest of degrees of being. Therefore, Being Itself is called the highest of degrees, for all of the worlds are created out of the rays of light of the Sacred Being; in this respect, all the degrees are related to It Itself. For, all the ranks of the existents are iterations of the Being of the Eternal Real, just as we related in the example of the mirror. It is well known that the Being of the Eternal Real does not enter into these degrees, but rather He is the originator and source of all of those degrees.

*The Real Being is not in these degrees such that
You can reckon Him with them, claiming partnership.*

That is, the Sacred Being of the Eternal Real is not located among the degrees of existents such that the supposition may arise of commonality and association between Him and the possible beings. Rather, the Being of the Exalted Real is the originator and source of all the worlds of existence and is not the same as all the rays of His Sacred Light (which is the light of the Will) which become existent. So the particular degrees are possible beings, and the Exalted Real is the highest of degrees in His Own Being, and the creator of all possible beings: indicating this very notion is the declaration *'the highest of degrees is the Possessor of the Throne'* (40:15). The term 'Throne' intends the relational being of possible beings and all creatures. The application of 'Throne' to the totality of created beings was previously mentioned when it was said that 'Throne' is said with respect to all creatures; from another point of view, with respect to knowledge of the Exalted Real, in explication of the verse 'the Merciful One is seated on the Throne' (20:5), it is said: 'either *istawā* (seated, established) is from (*min*) each thing, or in (*fī*) each thing, or upon (*'alā*) each thing.' So possessing the Throne indicates that the Exalted True is the Lord and Originator of all the degrees of being, not among them.

*The knowledge that the Essence of His Being is Exalted
Is generated degree after degree.
Their lights come to be known by us as doctrinal points,*

*By equivocation in the understandings of calm intellects:
 But likening knowledge of the Essence of Being to
 Being is according to the imaginings of foolish people,
 For they claim that Being is equivocal;
 And here they think it is valid by association.*

Thus, knowledge about the Essence of the Sacred Being is posited in the manner of [information obtained] degree after degree, according to the difference of degrees in the worlds of possible beings. The lights of those degrees, in the view of knowers and possessors of calm intellects and strong understandings, is actualized as a saying by equivocation. But in the imaginings of the fools among the philosophers and their followers, information about the Essence of Being is likened to the Being of the Eternal Real, and unrestricted equivocation is posited; they imagine association between the Necessary Exalted and possible beings. [They are] neglectful of difference of degrees and levels in the signs and the lights of the Sacred Being which are the expressions and productions of the Exalted Real. But different degrees and equivocation and association in the Sacred Being are utter impossibilities, so they may be passed over in silence.

*The people of the Unity of Being committed heresy,
 By not actualizing the concept [of Being];
 They did not know that Being is a reality,
 That He is the Sacred One, everlastingly:
 But there is nothing conforming to Him in the imagination,
 No partnership with any thing existing in reality,
 Such that you could reckon it with His Essence by indicating it,
 Though it be conceived by some created mind.*

Mullā Ismā‘īl Khājū‘ī

One of the leading philosophical figures in Isfahan during the Afshārid and Zand periods, and a person whose influence was very much present in the Qajar period, Mullā Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad Khājū‘ī (also known as Khwājū‘ī) hailed originally from Mazandaran but came to Isfahan early in his life to study philosophy and the religious sciences. He settled in an area of the city known as Kū-yi Khājū and hence became known as Khājū‘ī. He soon became a famous teacher and wrote and taught in Isfahan until his death in 1171/1757–1758 or, according to some sources, in 1173/1759–1760. He was buried in the famous Takht-i Fūlād cemetery in that city not far from the tomb of Mīr Findiriskī. Khājū‘ī was known for his exceptionally fine character and display of courtesy (*adab*) and was drawn strongly to Sufism. Some even claimed that he performed supernatural feats (*karāmāt*). He was held generally in great esteem and even the king Nādir Shāh held him in respect. Besides his intellectual acumen and spiritual attainment, Khājū‘ī was also gifted artistically and is said to have been a fine calligrapher and to have had beautiful handwriting in several styles.

In philosophy Khājū‘ī was a student of Mullā Muḥammad Šādiq Ardistānī, who was himself a student of Mullā Rajab ‘Alī Tabrīzī and Muḥaqqiq-i Lāhijī among others. Khājū‘ī was also a student of Mīr Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khātūnābādī who is said to have also been his spiritual master. Some sources state that Khājū‘ī also studied with Faḍīl-i Hindī. Khājū‘ī in turn trained a number of students, some of whom became eminent philosophers themselves, including Mullā Mahdī Narāqī and Āqā Muḥammad Bīdābādī, who in addition to being a well-known philosopher was also an alchemist.

Although Khājū‘ī had studied different schools of Islamic philosophy, he became devoted especially to the philosophy of Mullā Šadrā. He is in fact considered to be, along with Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, one of the figures most responsible for the revival of Šadrian philosophy during the Zand era and at the beginning of the Qajar period after the partial eclipse of Mullā Šadrā’s philosophical school at the

end of the Safavid period. Khājū'i became in fact particularly famous in Isfahan as a teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought. The philosophical works of Khājū'i belong therefore to the Ṣadrian school and represent an important stage in its later history.

Traditional sources attribute some 150 works to Khājū'i in fields ranging from philosophy and philosophical theology to jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and commentary upon certain Shi'i prayers (*ad'iyah*). There is, however, sometimes confusion in some traditional sources between the Khājū'i under consideration here and other figures with a similar name. As the pioneering research of Jalāl Humā'i, one of the outstanding Persian scholars of the fourteenth/twentieth century, has shown, there are three other philosophers in Isfahan with nearly the same name: Mullā Ismā'il Khājū'i (d. 1243/1827–28) who wrote glosses upon the *Shawāriq* of 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī and a commentary upon the *Mashā'ir* of Mullā Ṣadrā and who was a teacher of Ḥājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī; Mullā Ismā'il Khājū'i (d. 1246/1830–1831) who was a descendent of our Khājū'i and who taught philosophy; and Mullā Ismā'il Darbkūshkī Iṣfahānī (d. 1304/1886–1887) who was also a teacher of Islamic philosophy. In some sources works are attributed to Mullā Ismā'il Khājū'i, with whom we are dealing here, that belong to these other figures.

Among the works that most consider to belong definitively to the corpus of writings of our Khājū'i, one can mention the following: *Ibtāl al-zamān al-mawhūm* (On the Refutation of Illusory Time); *al-Imāmah* (The Imamate); *Ta'yīn-i 'id-i nawrūz* (On the Determination of the Festivity of the [Persian] New Year); *al-Jabr wa'l-tafwīḍ* (Determinism and Free Will); and *Hidāyat al-fu'ād ilā aḥwāl al-ma'ād* (Guide of the Heart to the States of Resurrection). Many of the writings of Khājū'i remain in manuscript form and have been neither printed nor studied. Still, his reputation became established as a major philosophical figure who revived the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā in the Zand period and was instrumental in its spread during the Qajar period. That is why he was well known to later philosophers who were devoted to the transcendent philosophy/theosophy (*al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*). In fact they considered him to be one of the definitive authorities of this school holding a position of honour in its history.

The selection from *Ibtāl al-zamān al-mawhūm* that follows begins with an examination of Mīr Dāmād's concept of time and then discusses such concepts as renewable and perishable entities which, it is argued, have no essence other than continuous cessation. The static and non-static nature of time is examined with reference to the views of philosophers such as Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, Ṭūsī, and Qūshchī among others. Mullā Ismā'il Khājū'i concludes this treatise by positing that belief in the generation of the world does not require the positing of illusory time.

ON THE REFUTATION OF ILLUSORY TIME

Ibṭāl al-zamān al-mawhūm

Translated for this volume by Majid Fakhry from Mullā Ismā'īl Khājū'i, *Ibṭāl al-zamān al-mawhūm* (Tehran, 1384 Sh./2006), pp. 313–350.

In the Name of God the Merciful, The Compassionate, whose assistance we seek.

After thanking God, the uniquely eternal, immutable, subsistent, permanent and perpetual [Being], before whom the linearity of time is meaningless because of His eternity; we offer our prayer to the Lord of the two worlds, and Muḥammad and his companions, the noblest of humankind.

This is what the humble, poor, mortal, and sinful [servant of God], Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ismā'īl al-Māzandarī, says to the effect that upon examining the arguments of the Master (Mīr Dāmād), who lent credence, and examined [the concept of time], in repudiation of the views of illusory/imaginary time, I found them very true and people of understanding should not question them.

However, he has given some points and addressed to this matter some doubts and queries that I decided to indicate broadly in the path of truth and justice, with a view to revealing the truth of the matter without any presumption, trusting that God will guard us against error and falsehood of any kind in words and deeds. For, He is the source of inspiration for reason and the teacher of truth, and He is the beginning and the end.

The Master (Mīr Dāmād) says: 'Belief in illusory time, as the *Mutakallimūn* put it, is one of the falsehoods of dark imagining and the manifestations of melancholic spirit and its representations. First because, as you have already learned, no definition, expiration, renewal, going or coming, succession, extension, or cessation can be imagined with respect to time. For these are corollaries of the existence of motion, the continuity of change and the gradual occurrence of things one by one. This being the case, how can one conceive, with respect to pure non-being and perfect negation, any distinctions in point of limits, successive states, and changing periods or moments, so that one can conceive of perpetuity, flux, finitude, and infinity?'

The learned scholar, Jamāl al-Dīn has stated in his comments on the *Khafriyyah Epistle*, following his citation of these words of the learned Master (Dāmād):

We do not grant that predicating extension, cessation, and the like are attributes of motion. For why cannot one infer from the continuity of the existence of the Necessary Being the existence of something continuous in the form of renewal and cessation? It is rather apparently the case which cannot be denied. For how could that be the case while they say that definitive motion derives from intermediary motion

and time derives from the now in flux? For just as the continuous, renewed, and expiring entity can be derived from the individual entity which is neither extended, divisible, susceptible of renewal or cessation, the same can be asserted here without distinction. From this appears the falsity of what some commentators have stated in their refutation to the effect that if it is an illusory matter, it would have an original source, to which one may turn. For, it is either necessary or contingent, but it is impossible that it should be necessary in being, but is rather contingent, or else an eternal being would exist other than God Almighty. What we prefer to say is that it derives its existence from the Necessary and Almighty Being. This cannot be refuted and (the Master) has not offered anything other than this contention.

I say that the thrust of what (Jalāl al-Dīn) has proposed in a well-expressed manner, may God refresh his face, is the denial of the proposition that time is the measure of motion, allowing for its being the measure of durability. This is exactly what Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī has stated, saying that what exists in time cannot be imagined to endure except in continuous time; whereas what does not exist in it, such as the Necessary Being and non-temporal abstractions, their duration must have a measure of time. Thus time is the measure of the duration of existence and its continuity. This is the case, despite the fact that it does not conform with his claim that time is the measure of duration as such, although as will appear shortly, he has also claimed that it is the measure of existence.

This can be countered by saying that what is understood by duration is the continuity of existence, insofar as it relates to the succeeding time, so that it will be dependent on it. Hence, were time a measure thereof, it would be dependent on it, leading to circularity. Accordingly, to correct the sense of the endurance of the Necessary (Being), it will be necessary to speak of estimative time, as will be shown later, or to assert that the existence of the Almighty consists in the impossibility of the accidents of cessation of existence supervening on Him. Therefore, that does not mean the continuity of His existence as corresponding to time or transcending time. For, He was while nothing else existed beside Him. That is why they have interpreted the Perpetual, which is one of His names, as that which is not susceptible of perishability.

Moreover, you understand that that extended, renewable, and perishable entity, which has no other essence than continuous cessation, renewal, and instability, cannot be derived except from that whose relation to external entities is different. Now, before the emergence of the corporal world, there was no other existent than God. Even if we grant that the intelligences existed prior to Him, God's relation to them, as well as their relation to each other, will not be different, because it is the relation of the permanent to the permanent. How, then, can we infer from God's reality, which is described as continuous and stable, that which has a measure which can be described as renewal and instability?

As for deriving conclusive motion from intermediary motion, that follows from the fact that although it is in itself an individual, continuous entity, which is neither extended nor divisible or renewed, it is nevertheless such that it is attended by the differentiation of relations in reference to the limits supposed with respect to distance. Therefore, it has two aspects of essential continuity and spatial flux through its continuity in itself and its flux in relation to those limits. It produces in the imagination a continuous condition which is not static, referred to as motion in a conclusive way. This is the source of its derivation from it.

In another respect, a static cause to which no non-static matter has been conjoined cannot give rise to a non-static matter. Otherwise the effect will fail to succeed the cause. However, intermediary motion, even if it were a static matter, which is continuous from the beginning of the distance to its end, will not require a change in the relation of the limits supposed to belong to distance in point of succession. For, even if it is static in essence, it will not be static by accident.

Here the difference is clear and perhaps the Commentator (Jamāl al-Dīn), may God raise his station, may have looked at one of its two essential aspects but overlooked its other accidental aspect and so did not realize that the source of extraction is the sum of both aspects and that the same is true of the flowing instant. For despite its continuity and persistence in itself, similar to motion in the sense of intermediary, it is subject to flux and difference of relation from which can be drawn something extended, renewable, ceasing, and conforming to the motion in the sense of cessation. In fact, time in the sense of extension is something which is formed in the imagination, as emanating from the flowing instant which exists externally, by reason of its instability and its gradual formation, like the line drawn by a falling drop of water or a moving flame. This is different from the existence of the Necessary Being, who exists simply without any difference in His relation to external objects, due to their non-existence prior to the creation of the world. To suppose them to exist prior to Him would make what has existence by (Divine) command a relative, hypothetical matter and this is contrary to what the Commentator (Jamāl al-Dīn) intended. Therefore, we cannot infer from the very essence of the Necessary Being, by observing His permanent existence, something which has an extended, renewable, and perishable measure in itself. For the changeable cannot be derived from the unchanging, because the one cannot comprehend the other.

In short, time is not static and therefore cannot be the measure of the static; otherwise, an entity could come to be without its measure. Therefore, it is a measure of what is not static, and whatever is not static is motion. Thus time is its measure, as the Master of all scholars has shown.

Now, if it is established that time is the measure of motion, it follows that where there is no motion, there will be no time. This confirms the view that predicating extension, cessation, and the like is a subsidiary of the existence of motion and therefore cannot be drawn from the continuity of existence.

Thus we may summarize this discourse by stating that even if imaginary time has a reality in itself, it is not essentially necessary, but is rather a part of the world and not a substance existing in itself. Therefore, it must have a locus in which it subsists and that can only be the motion which sustains it. That motion must have a substratum, which is no other than body. If it does not exist in reality, then it simply has a name without being realized. Why then do they call it time, and an essentially continuous quantum, which is not static?

From what we established, it appears that what some scholars have stated in its refutation is true and essentially sound. The falsehood belongs to the views of those who were accused of falsity since they, without giving a single proof of the first part assume it is self-evident and clear. To draw one opinion from another requires a suitable original [premise] that is necessary.

Do you not see that if, for instance, they meet Zayd, who is brave, they say 'I met a lion', but they would not say that if he were a coward, except in jest. For inference refers to comprehending something drawn from another in an analytical manner, as when we draw the concept of existence from essence and comprehending it in some sense, by reference to its accidental aspects, such as the origination of effects from which existence is derived. Thus, we cannot derive cold from fire, virtue from an ass, intelligence from the wall, as any sensible person will recognize.

From this, the falsity of his (Mīr Dāmād) words, may God have mercy on him, will appear. For we understand that he derives (time) from the Necessary Being, since His existence cannot be the source of deriving it therefrom; since measure and extension pertain exclusively to what has orderly parts, whether static or non-static. This is necessary, since what has no parts cannot have a measure, and existence, as such, has no parts. It is rather simple to imagine its duration and in that way you will understand the circularity it underlies.

From what we have detailed, it appears that what the Commentator (Jamāl al-Dīn) has presented as obvious, denying its possibility, is absurd, as will appear to whomever looks closely and carefully, and that what he quotes in its support can be urged against him. For, he has only increased the obscurity of the matter.

From the above, also appears the truth of the statement that belief in imaginary time is one of the lies and tricks of the dark imagination and the fabrications of the melancholic humor and its illusions. How well has the poet put it when he said: 'When Hudhām speaks, listen to her; for the truth is what Hudhām has spoken'.

You should also know that those who assert the existence of time assert the truth. For we know that there necessarily exists out there a past and future time and those who question that contradict the dictates of their own reason and do not deserve a response. Some of those (who assert the existence of time) differ with respect to its essence. Some hold that it is a substance, which is neither a body or bodily, and is necessary in itself. Others have held that it is the equalizer, while others hold that it is a form of motion. Abu'l-Barakāt (al-Baghdādī) held that it is the measure

of existence, while Aristotle held that it is the measure of motion, which modern scholars have acceded to and is actually the truth.

Then the Master (al-Dāmād) says: 'Secondly, because, were that which they imagined to be fulfilled in non-being, it would be time itself or motion itself; since it would then be a quantified flux, the whole thereof longer than the part or parts thereof, existing in succession rather in conjunction. To be so essentially would make it identical with time, but if [it were so] accidentally it would be identical with motion. For they have applied to time and motion the name of non-being. I wonder, for what reason has time or motion deserved the nominal negation and attribution to non-being?'

The venerable Commentator (Jamāl al-Dīn) says: 'We do not attribute to non-being measure or expansion and the like, except accidentally, insofar as its medium¹ is described that way, although it does not have to be either time or motion.'

The crux of the matter is that we say that the non-being of the world existed originally in an extended, renewable and perishable medium, similar to the existence of Zayd in time. And just as Zayd's existence does not have to be time or motion, the existence of non-being does not have to be equivalent to time or motion. This is rather similar to Zayd's non-existence in time, prior to the time of his existence, the only difference being that the latter time is divisible in terms of day and night and is qualified in similar ways, but that is not true of the other time. The conclusion of that argument is simply the existence of time there, and those who concede this do not grant that non-being is identical with motion or time.

I say that those words of that learned scholar are odd and strange, for the obvious corollary is applying existence to the specific external (world), but they do not grant the existence of extended and renewable time externally.

Our master Mirzā Jān has stated in his *Commentary on the Sources* that 'the application of the absolute to the perfect individual is not to be understood absolutely, but rather insofar as the term absolute is understood specifically as applied often to the absolute realized within, so that its use would be equivalent to a conventional reality, such as existence. Thus, due to its widespread use in external ways, it was assumed to be specific.' (End)

Perhaps he meant that imaginary time is similar to time which is in conformity with motion exclusively, even if it has no existence externally, not that it has existence in a real sense. The external existent is actually equivalent to the flowing moment, which is in conformity with motion, in the sense of intermediacy, and this is the existence of the Necessary Being, who transcends that, and is identical with external existence. For, due to His endurance, which is synonymous with the endurance of the flowing moment, He is able to produce an extended and renewable reality which they call imaginary time in which the cessation of the world occurs.

1. Arabic *wi'ā'*, container or vessel.

Thus, there is no difference between the two senses of time except in terms of what he (Mirzā Jān) has stated.

This, in light of what you learned, is an unacceptable gambit. For those who assert it do not recognize any difference between the two except in point of that accidental condition. For, how can that be when they declare that time there is non-existent and only comes to be with the original creation of the world? For when their adversaries object that predicating a specific moment of time to the act of creation, which would entail that it is distinguishable from other moments of time prior to that creation, they respond that these were non-existent and are indistinguishable except for the imagination. In fact, the existence of time begins with the beginning of the existence of the universe and none of other existents could have come to be prior to the existence of time, as such. (This is their view.)

In short, had they said that its existence of extension is similar to the existence of this time, insofar as it has distinct parts which are distinct and cannot coexist as such, one could ask why the existence of the world was confined to the part (of time) that it came to be in? Moreover, the subdivision of that time into night and day is confined to what falls under the sphere of Venus, to which the shadow of the earth reaches. But, as far as what is within it or above it, it does not have that night and day. It follows that there cannot be any difference between imaginary time and this one [time]. How then did that come to be imaginary and the other real, while believing in its eternity is a form of unbelief, while belief in the eternity of the other is a form of orthodox belief, even the subsidiary decrees thereof?

Its emergence at the other period preceding it or its being imaginary in the aforementioned sense would not then interfere with the search of the determinant among its parts. What then is the sense of their assertion that the origination (of the world) depended on it, since there was no time prior to it?

It remains that the meaning of imaginary amounts to what the imagination invents, such as the duality of number three, and then it would be a pure and complicated negation. If, then, that simple non-being was qualified, as they imagine as estimative, quantified, extension, renewal, and expiration and such like, it would then be such either in essence and in that it would be identical with time in itself, or by accident and then it would be the same as motion in itself. For, predicating increase and decrease, extension and the like, of motion depends on its measure. In fact, it has two measures, one pertaining to distance, and that by accident, and one pertaining to its expansion and that in essence. For its essence as such requires that, insofar as its parts do not co-exist, but succeed each other, and that last measure is equivalent to time.

In short, motion has no other reality other than instability and its counterpart is instability. As far as time is concerned, it does not have the property of extension, renewal, or instability. Therefore, (the opponents) have applied to time and motion without cause the name pure nothingness and pure darkness.

From what we have established, it appears that the aim of the one who infers from the aforementioned non-being what the Commentator (Jamāl al-Dīn) has posited as the medium thereof, appears from his words in the first proof. How can one imagine, in pure nothingness and non-entity, distinct boundaries and successive condition, which (the Commentator) asserts in these words: 'There is no diversity in nothingness.' And these words: 'And that negative extension, not the nothingness which occurs in that medium?' For, were the non-existence of the world to occur in a real time, which is not other than that time except with respect to what he mentioned to the effect that its is accidental; then it would follow that an actual entity other than the Necessary Being would exist. It will not help in that regard to evade this conclusion by stating that what they mean by the world is something other than that time. This is something which does not exist, as the Commentator will assert, following others, despite the clear divergence and pure contradiction. Further clarification and correction will follow in that regard.

Moreover, were time an existing entity, with different parts and a full-fledged existence in itself, as the learned Commentator states thereafter, and were the people who concede this to agree, then, in what sense did they call it illusory time, rather than real or existing time, despite the fact that the two agree in all essential respects, except with respect to night and day and the like. However, that does not entail necessarily stripping it of the property of existence and replacing it by the predicate of non-existence; unless one were to say that terminology is not a matter of dispute.

It appears that what involved him in that dilemma, may God forgive me, is that, when he saw the arguments of the Master (al-Dāmād) in repudiation of the thesis of imaginary time are strong and well thought out, and he sought to evade them by asserting that time is non-existent and contended instead that it is an existing entity, he was unaware either that that would lead to belief in eternity, which he wanted to evade. Thus he succumbed unconsciously to that from which he was trying to flee.

You also know that if one were to agree with what the Commentator says, then one could assert that that is a groundless claim. For is not the dispute about anything other than asserting the existence of that extended, renewed, and ceasing medium, so that one could hold that the non-existence of the world occurred in it and was qualified by its properties accidentally? When the Ashʿarite theologians asserted the existence of that medium in which the non-existence of the world took place in connection with the creation of the world, the opponent could not grant it or believe in it without proof. But you have already learned that that cannot be conceived, let alone demonstrated.

In fact, one can only grant that there are three media according to us: Eternity, which is the medium of explicit existence preceded by explicit non-existence; Time, which is the medium of changeable, measurable, and flowing entities; and Perenneity, which is the medium of pure existence not preceded by non-existence,

of which they assert that the relation of the permanent to the changeable is eternity, that of the changeable to the changeable is time, and that of the permanent to the permanent is perennity. The media are thus confined to those three and whoever claims that eternal non-being has a medium in which it exists and in relation to which it is described as measurable and expandable and the like, is forced to offer the evidence.

For to compare it to non-existence as the opposite of the existence of time, such as the non-existence of Zayd at a time which preceded the time of his existence, is an argument with a difference. Insofar as that non-existence, being the antithesis of that time which flows, is quantified and measurable, it is also accidental, contrary to eternal non-being, which cannot be described as measurable due to the absence of that whereby it can be measured. It follows that it is pure non-being which is not measurable or quantifiable, whose negation requires a proof. The fact that we cannot conceive of it as preceding existence in an accidental way, without the medium, as the Commentator has claimed, although it has been so demonstrated, does not invalidate it.

All the proofs for non-existence are suspect insofar as they are clearly separate, since the reports from both sides assert the existence of the Lord of the World without it. This has been confirmed by the consensus of Muslims and others, and by the famous prophetic tradition,¹ which is not countered by any rational proof, but is rather supported by rational proof, as will be shown at the end of the treatise, God willing.

If the thesis of imaginary time, which preceded the existence of the world, cannot be affirmed, although that is contrary to the letter of the religious law, it must be asserted that that distinct status was due to the pure nothingness, actual and non-temporal. For whatever exists as such does not need to be in time necessarily, just as existing in place. For, the non-existence of the world, although it is really factual, does not have to be in time and that which time has no reference to any part of its chain of causes cannot be said to be (in time).

The decisive reply to the substance of the problem is what we have indicated earlier and will repeat later, to the effect that were eternal non-existence to have a medium that medium would be non-existent and accordingly unable to be described as measurable, quantifiable, equal, or unequal, since there is no differentiation or determination proper to nothingness. How then could one of them be a container, qualified in the previous manner essentially, while the other contained and qualified that way accidentally or be existent? For then it would follow that an eternal entity other than the Necessary Being exists. Moreover, why was that eternal being not a self-subsisting entity, since it must have a place to occupy, although the only place thereof that can be imagined is motion and then the eternity of a corporeal entity would follow, as already mentioned.

1. The *ḥadīth* states: 'God existed and there was nothing in existence beside Him'.

From what we have established, it follows that eternity is different from time and some of its parts precede and others succeed each other. Rather, it is equivalent to non-time, which precedes time in a non-temporal way, like the parts of time which precede each other. Moreover, between God and the world there is no measurable distance. For, were it something which exists, it would be part of the world; otherwise it would be nothing. Nor is one related to the other temporally as prior, posterior, or simultaneous insofar as time cannot be predicated of the True One or the beginning of the world. For, nothing exists as pure being which is not part of not-being except the existence of the True One, on the one hand, and that which emanates from nothingness, which is the world, on the other.

The world in fact comes into being in no time, although this is difficult to grasp for most people, who imagine that eternity is part of time and precedes all its parts, although they do not call it time. They have instead conceded its meaning and have imagined that God is subject to it and nothing else exists in it until He started creating things one by one and part by part from Himself. This is pure fantasy and absurdity. For God Almighty is not in time or place, but encompasses them both. How, then, could a reasonable person say that the world as a whole is preceded by a temporal nothingness and that the time of its destruction is one of its parts?

In short, in the absence of time, there will subsist a static condition, in which there is neither priority nor posterity. If conditions changed by virtue of motion (which is divisible into parts), they would not change simultaneously, but rather every part of their occurrence which succeeds another would occur in the mind. This is time.

This is how the problem which puzzled the Commentator is resolved. For he says: 'If nothingness in itself is described as essentially prior to existence accidentally, it would then require a medium and a container in which it takes place, and then it can be described as measurable and quantifiable and so on. That it precedes it without that cannot be grasped by us. Maybe it requires a subtler talent which we do not have. Another explanation of that will follow.'

Now to hold that essential priority cannot be understood since it refers to temporal priority, as the Commentator holds, is not clear insofar as no proof of its invalidity has been advanced. In fact, the coming of the world into being cannot be understood without it, as the author of *al-Tajrīd* (Ṭūsī) has stated and the Commentator has explained in the following words: 'the coming to be of the world after it was not negates any positive assertion.' For he says, 'It appears that by posterity the author here means essential posterity', and he has rejected thereby the view of those who state that posterity means temporal posterity. This is similar to his saying that the author (of *al-Tajrīd*) does not believe in imaginary time, as his venerable father has asserted. Otherwise, by posterity he would have meant temporal posterity and he would then have subscribed to the view of eternal generation. For, having denied the necessity of eternity and having asserted

temporal generation since he declared the existence of the world as subsequent to nothingness, it would follow either that that takes place in time, which is contrary to his view, and yet does not conform to this statement 'subsequent to nothingness', or in eternity, which is the point, as will be shown later.

From what we have given in detail, it appears that asserting the existence of imaginary time and positing it as the medium of the non-existence of the world contradicts the view of the religious believers, as well as the view of those who affirm it and falsify it, although they sought to correct. For as the (poet) says: 'How can the salesman repair what time has corrupted?'

Then the Master (al-Dāmād) says: 'Thirdly, then the Almighty Creator would fall within one specific limit of that negative extension and the world in another limit, so that that imaginary extension would fall between God and the world. It would then be true that the world has succeeded the Almighty in existence and if that extension were infinite, it would be enclosed between two extremities which are its two margins or extremities.'

The Commentator says: 'By asserting that between the Creator and the beginning of the world an eternal imaginary time intervenes, they mean that prior to the world there existed an imaginary extension, in which the world did not exist. However, the Creator existed in the sense in which we now say that the Almighty exists, not that time is an intermediary between the Almighty and the world. For then the Almighty would exist at one extremity and the world at another, so that it would follow that the infinite would be confined to what lies between two extremities. This is very clear.'

I say he (the Commentator) states that that eternal extension, being a real entity existing in itself, while the origin of its reality or the principle of its existence is the existence of the Necessary Being, as he has stated earlier, it follows that the Necessary Being, as he has asserted too, must exist at its inception as an intrinsic reality. This is because He is the origin and principle of the world upon its termination, corresponding to His termination, and so He will be intermediary between the two.

However if it is supposed to be infinite in extension essentially, then the origination of the Necessary Being would stem from it. For, insofar as the world is contingent, its extension is finite. Therefore, the preceding extension separating them being finite, it would be contingent. For, what exceeds the finite by a finite amount is finite and therefore contingent, from which it follows, as stated above, that the infinite in itself is enclosed between two limits, which are its two extremities and this is very clear.

In other words, being a possible existing entity, it has a source from which it emanated but, having ended at the beginning of the world, the infinite being thus assumed, the infinite was enclosed between the two limits, unless it is said not to end with it. For, just as it was a vehicle of its non-being prior to the existence of the world, it would be a vehicle for its existence following its existence. Being pre-eternal, it

would be post-eternal, due to the necessity of the permanent existence of the contingent effect upon the permanence of its complete cause. For that eternal entity, being an effect of the Necessary Being and its existence being independent of any condition other than the continued existence of the Necessary Being, its permanence is assured through it. This depends on assuming that its perfection flows from the Necessary Being, as one could answer, so reflect on this and what it entails.

You should know that the Commentator, prior to his comments on the Master's views, has stated that: 'We do not say that it is necessary that a moment of time should exist in which it can be said that the Necessary Being existed, but not the world. The point is rather that a separation between the Necessary Being and the world should be fulfilled, of which it can be said: "The Necessary Being has existed in the sense it exists now when the world did not exist."'

I say that that separation is due to an extended entity existing in itself, which is either static or self-subsistent or not. However, despite the fact that both presuppose eternity, they cannot be sustained. Otherwise what involves separation would be spatial and not temporal or non-static, and that would be a time which entails motion and in turn entails bodily status. Then its eternity would follow without separation being realized. Otherwise it would be due to a non-extended and non-existent entity, so that existence would be preceded by non-distinct non-existence, which cannot be quantified or measured.

Otherwise that separation could be due to an existing non-extended entity, which does not necessitate separation. Otherwise it would be extended, contrary to our assumption, and then eternity would follow necessarily.

Moreover, it could be due to an extended entity which does not exist in itself, and then the limits of that extension would be equally similar, since there is no differentiation or determinant in non-being, such as disposition, motion, or the like. Then one could ask why it had that specific limit and did not exist in a preceding limit. (This is what the Master, Dāmād, regarded as a fourth argument in repudiation of imaginary time.)

What we have laid down in detail reveals the falsity of the Commentator's argument in his response to the effect that this is an arbitrary contention without proof. For perhaps some difference in its parts existed, insofar as it is not pure non-being, to which that does not apply, it being instead a matter of (Divine) command in which non-being occurred. For it entails, apart from what you have already learned, that those imaginary entities, when the cause of their generation does not exist externally, are purely imaginary, invented or unrealized in fact, such as the duality of number five and the like. How then can one imagine an intrinsic or real differentiation here, and what could be the cause of that real differentiation, despite the identity of the nature of that extension? Is it perhaps a disposition on the part of the recipient, or was it due to the influence of the agent emanating from the motion which conserves it or the like? Moreover, why have its parts become

different without that which causes the differentiation? Or is that simply pure imagining and assumption that does not conform to what the authorities believe?

It has been reported that Ghazzālī and Shahrastānī and others have held that the imagination simulates a spatial extension which does not stop at a specific point and that the world is imagined to exist in part of it. Here reason assumes that were it to exist outside, some of its parts would precede the others in position, while the other parts subsequent to it. Without that extension having an external source, the same is true of temporal extension, which is purely imaginary and has no source existing outside.

Similarly, just as the judgment of reason does not determine with respect to spatial extension that some parts of it precede other parts and therefore have a cause, it does not determine with respect to temporal extension that some parts of it precede other parts and therefore have a cause. We rather affirm that imagining extension is inherent in our nature, so much so that reason coupled with imagination tends to judge that there exists an infinite space of which our world is just a part. Similarly it judges that there is an infinite time which the world is part of, without that extension, having a basis in fact.

The truth is that there is neither above the world nor below it a plenum or a vacuum, since directions are determined with reference to specific parts of the world. Similarly, there is neither before nor after with respect to the world, but this does not entail the infinity of time. Nor does it follow from the first assumption that space is infinite, whereas time is finite, just as space is finite in exactly the same way. For the judgment of the imagination that time is infinite is analogous to its judgment that space is infinite. Therefore, there is no relevance to its judgment with respect to both space and time. This is the crux of their words to the effect that (time) is purely nothing. The Commentator's suggestions, which disagree with reality, are in fact unsatisfactory suggestions.

Then the Master (Dāmād) states: 'Fifth, for what is free of incidents or relations will exist jointly with any extension you suppose and with each of its parts or with each limit of its limits there exists an accompanying condition which is determined in a single way, but encompasses all its parts and limits in a single manner, regardless of whether that extension exists in reality or in the imagination, as you have been told many times. Therefore, predicating one of the limits of that imaginary extension does not amount to its coming after the True Creator or succeeding Him. For, were the extension of time which exists in relation to Him of this type, then imaginary time would be more worthy of it.'

The Commentator says belief in the aforementioned extension is only intended to confirm the existence of nothingness prior to existence. That has been confirmed and their contention that the world succeeds the Almighty in time is merely due to that, rather than the fact that the Necessary Being existed when the world did not exist. Thus it might be said that the Necessary Being is not

subject to existence in time, which does not follow. However, you have learned that one might assert that the existence of the Almighty corresponds to that of time and then, posteriority or succession in this sense would be righted also. So remember this!

I wonder how they correct through that extension the coming to be of non-being prior to being? The fact is that extension exists according to them, as he declared shortly before, saying: ‘What follows on this assumption is simply the existence of time there and those who concur in that simply believe in it, which is an incoherence.’

However, you have already learned that they do not concur in this view, but rather disapprove of it. Their view of the above extension is intended simply to confirm that the Necessary Being existed at a time when the world did not exist, so that they might assert that ‘God existed while nothing existed together with Him’. Then they cannot hold that God’s existence is concurrent with eternal time which exists as part of the world, since that contradicts the generality of the parts. For the existent in itself may be said to be a thing, since existence is concurrent with thinghood. However, asserting that concurrence is identical with asserting eternity, even if that time existed. Otherwise, that would be simply a matter of verbiage without substantive realization of the object named. Therefore, it is necessary to posit an estimative time corresponding to eternal time, as will be shown later, and then that posteriority would be confirmed.

In short, the above-mentioned extension is either intrinsic or relative to things within it. If the former, then the general statement would negate its eternity, since it would imply the negation of things and the total negation of eternal entities whatsoever, in whatever condition or any respect, except for the existence of the Necessary Being. In fact, it implies the negation of incremental attributes also, and this is clear therein; otherwise something eternal would have co-existed with God in eternity. Then the multiplicity of eternals would follow, as implied by those who assert their multiplicity. Then their statement that prior to the world an eternal imaginary time existed would actually follow. For, if it is the case, it would not be an extended entity or else the limits of extension would be equal or similar, since there is no differentiation in nothingness nor is there a determining principle. If however, it is not an extended entity, they cannot confirm the reality of nothingness prior to existence in a temporal and essential sense. Then, it would follow that the world did not succeed the True Creator in a temporal sense. Similarly, their statement that the non-existence of the world is in an extended, renewed, and expired container or medium, similar to the existence of Zayd in time would follow. Why not when they are both equal in nothingness or non-being? And how can one be a container and the other a contained reality?

As for what has been surmised by some pseudo-philosophers to the effect that it was dissociated from the sense of the past, or rather absolute time, and what some

Sufis have said when they heard the prophetic tradition 'It is now as it has always been,' that is nothing but empty talk according to religious people.

First, because it entails the assertion of eternity, unless reference is made then to temporal coming-to-be.

Second, because as he has said in *al-Muntahā* that being is a reality with respect to the necessary and contingent by consensus, and because if it were figurative in one of them that would justify the negation of being in itself, because that is a feature of the figurative. However, negation is impossible and whoever disputes the predication of being to essences in a real sense questions the dictates of his reason.

Similarly, the statement that thinghood is more general than being, as the Mu'tazilites have held, to the effect that the possible non-existent is a fixed entity in the sense that essence can be posited externally as distinct from existence, is not troubling, as the judicious will recognize. It is rather the traditional reports that negate the assertion of its existence eternally and its actually being a thing, so that those who profess it should be declared as infidels; unless, it is argued that the charge of infidelity depends on belief in the eternity of both substances and accidents, which they (i.e. the Mu'tazilites) do not profess. For, the eternal is conceived by them as existing, but they do not assert its existence eternally. However, they were faced with a problem regarding affirmation and existence and so regarded the first more general than the second. For, they do not believe in the existence of an eternal entity, either essentially or in time, apart from God Almighty. This is equally true of those of them who assert the existence of states and those who do not.

You should also know that the Commentator has stated, before his reference to the Master (Dāmād), that it appears that just as we say that body is temporal in the sense that its existence corresponds to the existence of time, we might say this in the case of the Necessary Being also. For, it is a fact that His existence corresponds to the existence of time. However, He cannot be said to be temporal, in the sense that this existence corresponds to time, like motion. Nor does this hold in the case of bodies either and thus there is no problem here. This is the substance of his comments in this regard, but those claims of that learned scholar do not follow from what he said earlier, as his words might suggest.

This is what occurred to us as a matter of probability. If it happens to pertain to truth, then it is true, but if it is diabolical insinuation, we seek refuge in God, who knows the truth of the matter. It is rather what he borrowed from the words of the Master of the Learned ('Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib), as al-Khafri reports in his footnotes where he states: 'The relation of temporal entities to time is identical in point of existence, whether they coincide or not, and not in point of coincidence only. Otherwise bodies in time will not exist and will not be subject to temporal change.' He also says: 'There is no doubt that abstract entities, although innocent of change, can be said to be in time in point of existence.' What he means is that the relation of temporal entities to time corresponds to existence and does not

depend on corresponding to it. Thus abstract entities, which are free of change, may be related to time in the sense of simultaneity.

If you say just as abstract entities independent of change are referred to time in the sense of simultaneity, then the relation of all periods of time to it is not the same, due to its relation at every specific period of time. This is like the relation of this day to that time, in the sense of being simultaneous with it in point of existence. It is clear that the relation of all periods of time to this day is not the same. Their relation to the abstract entity existing with it is not the same. So what did the Master mean by saying ‘and so on’?

I say it is true that an abstract entity may be said to be today, as an adverb as far as the listener is concerned, rather than in itself as an abstraction. For it has no relation to this day or relevance to it except in being simultaneous with it at the beginning of existence. And just as it exists with it today at the beginning of existence, so whatever exists at all times at the origin of existence also exists. And just as it is true today that it exists with it at the origin of creation, it follows that it existed with it at all periods of time at the beginning of creation. It is equally true that it exists together with all other periods of time at the beginning of creation. Therefore, the negation of the equality of all periods of time to this day does not entail that its relation to the abstract entity simultaneous with it is the same. The reason is that this day is confined in point of existence to this day and the existence of the abstract entity is not so confined.

The Master says: ‘Sixthly, because time and space are two identical twins who drink, in matters of judgment, from a single breast as a single milk. Just as beyond spatial extension, I mean beyond the outermost sphere, which determines the different parts of the world, there is pure nothingness, neither vacuum nor pleasure, finitude nor infinity exist, so that if one were to attain its curved surface, he would not be able to stretch his hand or spread it. This is not because of a measurable obstacle, but because of the non-existence of space or distance, place or direction. Similarly, beyond the temporal extension strict nothingness exists, without measure, continuity, finitude or infinity and without increase or decrease. Therefore, you should listen and follow the right path and not be one of the ignorant folk.’ Here end his words.

The Commentator states: ‘The weakness (of these words) is obvious, because they are a simple representation which is not suited to philosophical discourse.’ The intent is that that is legalistic reasoning which only amounts to conjecture, while the matter calls for certainty, which should not be asserted by recourse to conjectural arguments.

I say that to grasp the status of time and space as two finite extensions and two correlatives in being and non-being, is justified. For time is simply the measure of the motion of the sphere, just as space is simply what the sphere encloses. Hence, were there no sphere there would be no time or space, as will be shown in the

explicit words of the Prince of the Faithful ('Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib), may God's prayers and peace be upon him. When God created the sphere and the bodies it contains, time and space came into being. For they are identical and are referred to in these words of his: 'They are similar because they are the effects of a single cause and they drink, in matters of judgment, of a single milk and a single breast, coupled with the vivid intuition in secure minds that gives rise to certainty that beyond the temporal extension strict nothingness exists in which there is no admixture of being, just as is the case beyond spatial extension.'

This is also an argument to counter the opponent and is known with certainty, although they have already declared that temporal extension is purely imaginary and has no original external existence, and what has no external origin is approached in philosophical matters with sound perception. Then there is no external reality but the product of the invention of imagination and it is a pure nothing, a simple negation which has no extension, increase or decrease, and so on, where the above-mentioned attributes are concerned. This is a subtle indication from him¹ that beyond temporal extension a static condition exists in which there is no priority or posteriority and which is referred to as immovable. It is a representation of the conception of what exists beyond that extension, which helps to resolve the doubt which has puzzled the Commentator, as already mentioned.

You should also know that non-extension refers to non-extension with respect to what is extended and that which lies beyond temporal extension is not of this kind, nor are finitude or infinity, increase and decrease, and the like. For whatever falls in that category pertains to the properties of measures and quantities, but what lies beyond temporal extension is pure nothing which has no measure, and does not have any of those properties in a primary manner. This is similar to the wall of which it cannot be said to be blind or possessed of sight. Similarly, abstract entities cannot be said to be inside the world or outside it, continuous or discontinuous. For going out denotes the negation of going in with respect to what is susceptible of going in.

Similarly the Commentator, having transcribed the words of the Master and others and, having responded thereto, has stated: 'It appears from what we have asserted that belief in imaginary time cannot be repudiated in that fashion.'

I say that from what we have said it appears that belief in imaginary time is incompatible with reason or tradition, that every aspect of those arguments in its support amounts to positive proof of its falsehood, and that the statements of this venerable scholar arose from want of deliberation or bad judgment. Yet it is not my intention in saying this to defame this great scholar. Not at all; for he is a pundit and his words are received by our respectable contemporaries with consent and

1. That is the Prince of the Faithful, 'Alī.

without much thought or deep reflection, as though they are deemed to be part of the revelation to the Messenger-Prophet on having heard the saying: ‘The fine horse might fall and the sharp sword might fail.’ For, inattention and forgetfulness are like second nature to mankind. Our only aim is not to trust in his aforementioned words on this subject; for they are far from the truth. Therefore, it is necessary to allude to this so that the imitator might not be misled by adhering to the claims of one who cannot explain them, even if he were to deploy all his efforts and full energies. For how can one prove what is contrary to reason or tradition?

The first, for the reason already given; whereas the second is for what the Commentator has indicated in these words: ‘Thereupon it would be necessary to consider whether (the words of the Master) conflict with the religious law or not. For if they do not conflict, then that is fine; if they do, as some reports indicate, then they should be abandoned, stopping short of the confusion.’ For the obvious sense of the famous prophetic tradition, as was stated earlier, and as al-Bāqir has said in response to Zararah ibn A‘yan who asked: ‘Did God exist while nothing existed?’ ‘Yes, God existed while nothing else existed’, al-Bāqir said.

This is also borne out by the words of ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā that God Almighty is eternal, eternity being His attribute which demonstrates to the reasonable seeker that nothing existed before Him, or with Him in His eternal permanence.

This has been shown to us, thanks to the public assertion of the miraculous attribute that nothing existed prior to God, and nothing is simultaneous with Him in His permanence, and the assertion of the falsity of the contrary claim of those who assert that something existed before Him or was with Him in His permanence which He did not create, since it existed alongside Him. For how could He be the Creator of that which has existed eternally with Him?

It is also stated in *al-Kāfi*, in the discussion of the attributes of the Divine Essence on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Muslim, reporting the view of Abū Ja‘far, who said: ‘I heard him say: “God existed while nothing other than He existed.”’ The Prince of the Faithful, (‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib) has stated in one of the sermons of *Nahj al-balāghah*: ‘The Almighty returns at the end of the world singly, nothing accompanying Him, as was the case before the world came into being. Similarly, He will continue to exist after its destruction, without reference to time, place, or moment. For then ages, times, years, and hours would have ceased, and there is nothing left save God, the One and Triumphant.’ This repudiates belief in illusory time, because were it a fixed essential reality derived from the continuity of the existence of the Necessary Being, or were it an extended entity, so as to serve as a container or medium corresponding to the non-being of the world, as the Commentator declares, it would have existed prior to the beginning of the world. However, testimony disproves that, especially on the assumption that it existed, there being no difference between the two times except with respect to night and day.

The answer is that what is negated is time, which arises at the emergence of the world, and is realized in itself, not the imaginary time which preceded its emergence and is purely imaginary and a mere fiction which has no existence, as Ghazzālī and Shahrastānī, are reported to have said. Hence it has no reality in itself, let alone as being divisible into ages, periods, years, and hours. That is why it has been said that creation is confined to its own duration, since there is no time prior to it. For it appears that the intended negation pertains to time which exists in itself; otherwise we might suppose a time prior to creation, even if there were no differentiation of its parts except hypothetically. There is no conflict between the two scholars and this should falsify the view of the Commentator, despite its arbitrariness. For, the realm of negation denotes generalization where specificity is not possible.

However, it appears that what Ṭūsī means by negated time is time in general, whether it exists or is purely imaginary. For it is an indefinite entity in the midst of negation. Thus, referring it to existing time specifically, as Qūshchī¹ has done, is groundless and has been shown to be so already in the context of determining that his view does not entail imaginary time. Therefore we cannot suppose an illusory time in which generation is possible. Belief in the generation of the world does not require positing illusory time, as appears from the words of the learned Ṭūsī also.

1. That is 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Samarqandī better known as Mullā 'Alī Qūshchī (d. 879/1474) a famous mathematician and theologian.

Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī

Mullā ‘Alī ibn Mawlā Jamshīd al-Nūrī al-Māzandarānī al-Iṣfahānī, known as Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, hailed originally from Mazandaran, a region near the Caspian sea, but travelled while still young to Qom and then in his youth to Isfahan, where he undertook his studies. Nūrī taught in Isfahan for the rest of his long life and died there in 1246/1831. He received his basic education in Qur’ānic and Islamic sciences with scholars in Mazandaran, and went on to more advanced studies in Qazwin and especially Isfahan. In addition to the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, he studied *ḥikmat* and *kalām* with masters such as Muḥammad Bīdābādī and Qāsim Mudarris Iṣfahānī, among others, in the intellectually rich ambiance of Isfahan.

Khawānsārī, a well-known biographer of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, describes him as a pious man who was recognized as one of the official ‘*ulamā*’ and who avidly supported the idea of *ijtihād* (independent judgment). Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī was a prolific author who composed a number of treatises among which we can mention commentaries on several of Mullā Ṣadrā’s works including the *Asfār*, *al-Mashā’ir*, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfī*, and *Asrār al-āyāt* (Secrets of the Qur’ānic Verses), in addition to several Qur’ānic chapters such as *al-Tawḥīd* (Unity) and a number of the sayings of Imam ‘Alī.

His opponents accused him of encouraging hostility towards the king and even alluded to a *fatwā* allegedly issued by Nūrī in which he sanctioned the killing of Ḥusayn ‘Alī Shāh. Such allegations led to Nūrī’s departure from Isfahan for Shiraz, where he also encountered some hostility from scholars. But he later returned to Isfahan where he taught until the end of his life.

Like many other great scholars of the Islamic intellectual tradition, Nūrī trained a number of students some of whom surpassed the master in fame such as Ḥājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī. Among Nūrī’s other accomplished students we can mention a grand shaykh of the Dhahabiyyah Sufi order, and philosophers such as Abu’l-Qāsim Rāz, Wāḥid al-‘Ayn Iṣfahānī, ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī and the latter’s son, Mullā ‘Alī Mudarris Zunūzī, Muḥammad Ja‘far Langarūdī and Mullā Ismā‘il Khājū‘ī.

In this chapter we have included a section of Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī’s *Sharḥ asrār al-āyāt*, which consists mostly of marginal notes or glosses (*ta’līqāt*) on the *Asrār al-āyāt*, of Mullā Ṣadrā. Here, we see a treatment of such subjects as human nature and its receptivity for the understanding of Reality, spiritual emanation, the transformation of man’s being through spiritual and intellectual growth, and an analysis of the meaning of Muḥammadan Light. Spiritual hermeneutics (*ta’wīl*) of a number of key issues pertaining to eschatology such as spiritual annihilation (*fanā’*) and resurrection, intellect and the circle of existence are among other issues discussed here.

M. Aminrazavi

GLOSSES UPON 'THE SECRETS OF VERSES'

*Sharḥ asrār al-āyāt*¹

Translated for this volume by Latimah-Parvin Peerwani from Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, *Ta'liqāt Ḥakīm Nūrī bar asrār al-āyāt-i Mullā Ṣadrā*, ed. S. M. Mūsawī (Tehran, 1385 Sh./2006), pp. 433–445.

(736) His saying: *Likewise the earthly*.²

This is evident, as you see, for in receptivity the earthly [element] like the human being can bear the trust. Why so? Because it is an element of all the elements of things. From its entirety issues man's primordial nature (*al-fiṭrah*) whose characteristic is to disrobe the covering of every form and all stations intermediary between it and the ultimate goal. It is called the 'trust', which is interpreted as the annihilation from everything other than God and subsistence by Him the Exalted.

1. These marginal notes or glosses (*ta'liqāt*) are on the *Asrār al-āyāt* of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1640) written by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī (d. 1830). They have been compiled and edited by S. M. Mūsawī in the book titled *Ta'liqāt Ḥakīm Nūrī bar asrār al-āyāt-i Mullā Ṣadrā* (Tehran, 1385 Sh./2006). The text of the *Asrār* of Ṣadrā in Arabic was lithographed in Iran in 1319/1902. It was translated into Persian by Muḥammad Khwājawī and published in Tehran by the Anjuman-i Īslāmī-yi hikmat wa falsafah-yi Īrān in 1363 Sh./1985. This text concerns the philosophical commentary on the verses of the Qur'ān related to the origin and return of creation, ontology, cosmology, psychology and anthropology. It consists of an introduction and three chapters; each chapter consists of several sections called *mashhad* (lit. the place of witnessing) and several rules (sing. *al-qā'idah*). The glosses of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī translated here are from the last rule of chapter two and from some sections of chapter three of *Asrār* which deal with anthropology and the science of return or resurrection.

Nūrī's glosses are not just notes clarifying some concepts and views of Mullā Ṣadrā in the text of *Asrār* but in addition, his own philosophical and theological commentary. Since they are glosses and not running commentary on the verses of the Qur'ān, it would be difficult to read them without the text of *Asrār* at one's disposal. So to facilitate its reading I have contextualized the glosses wherever possible in the footnotes to make their reading meaningful to some extent. For that purpose I have used the Persian translation of *Asrār* since the original Arabic text was inaccessible to me. Nūrī begins each gloss with the words 'His saying', implying what Ṣadrā says, followed by the text of *Asrār* which has been italicized by me to separate the text from the gloss. There is some confusion in the numbering of one gloss, no. 741, which is repeated, resulting in the incorrect numbering of the glosses till 789. In the translation I have left the numbering as it appears in the printed text of the glosses. The material given in square brackets is my explanation of the phrase or sentence which was not intelligible by itself.

2. The glosses from 736 to 752 are on *Asrar*, chapter two, section (*mashhad*) four, rule (*qā'idah*) four. In this chapter Ṣadrā explains the quiddity of the real man who, according to his theosophy, is the epiphany of the Divine Name Allāh and the vicegerent of the Merciful. The commentary of Ṣadrā is on the verse of the Qur'ān which states: *Indeed We presented the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were apprehensive of it, but man undertook it. Indeed he is most unjust and ignorant* [33:72]. In gloss 736 Nūrī explains why the earth being earthly could not undertake the 'trust' offered to it by God.

The difference between the two [i.e. the primordial nature of the earth and that of man] is the least intermediaries [for the latter] and more [for the former], as if there is no entry for it in that receptivity and its non-existence.

So I say: The truth here is, the difference between the two is due to something else by which the nature of the earth and its known earthly disposition, and the earth of man's disposition is differentiated, as the allusion to it preceded. The known earth with all its associates in being-element for everything by its specific form [or form of species] acquired for its matter, prevents and refuses the transmutation to that desired goal of the creation of all contingent worlds. That is because the receptivity for it is from the associative matter.

As for the earth of the sound human primordial nature, it is taught all the [divine] Names, the majestic and the least [majestic], so from the aspect of its specific form by which its matter is specified, it is prepared and ripe in readiness for conceiving the form of the straight path of God and the path of divine Unity which leads its wayfarer to that ultimate goal and the 'trust', which is the unity of the Presence of Essence of the most-holy Reality, the absolutely Rich in Himself, as it is unveiled from Him in His saying: *God bears witness that there is no god but He* (3:18). That is the unity of the Reality, and it is the unity of the real Essence of the Reality Himself, and it is the true Unity for which all things, from the beginning till the end, are created. As it is given in a sacred tradition (*ḥadīth qudsī*) famous among the common as well as the elite; 'I was a hidden treasure, and loved to be known'.¹ Now the secret of the Form of man's primordial nature, which by its Form is a receptive matter and an element for that ultimate Form, is that its Form is the material [or potential] intellect from the aspect of knowledge and action, and an elemental substance for the secret (*sirr*) of the friendship (*walāyah*)²

1. Cf. Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Aḥādith-i mathnawī*, henceforth AM (Tehran, 1347 Sh./1968), no. 70.

2. The concepts in this and the subsequent glosses such as Muḥammadan Reality, Muḥammadan Light, Face of God, Muḥammadan Logos, *walāyah*, etc. refer to the concept of Shi'i prophetology. According to this concept the human form in its pre-eternal glory called Adam, the supreme Spirit, first Intellect etc. is invested with, and is the keeper of, eternal prophecy of the essential primordial prophecy which was disclosed before time in the celestial world. He is also called the Muḥammadan Reality, the Muḥammadan Light, and the Muḥammadan Logos. This eternal prophetic Reality is a bi-unity. It possesses two 'dimensions', one external and exoteric, and one inner or esoteric. The *walāyah* is specifically the esoteric dimension of this eternal prophecy. Just as the exoteric 'dimension' had a final terrestrial manifestation in the person of Prophet Muḥammad, the esoteric 'dimension' likewise had the terrestrial epiphany which achieved in the person of the son-in-law of the Prophet, 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, the first Shi'i Imam, and the Seal of the Muḥammadan *walāyah* is Mahdī the twelfth Shi'i Imam. Now the essence of the Seal of the prophets and the Seal of the *awliyā'* (plural of *walī*) is one and the same viewed both exoterically (as prophecy, *nubuwwah*) and esoterically (as the *walāyah*). Further, according to Shi'i prophetology, there is the distinction between the gnostic prophecy (*nubuwwat al-ta'rif*), and legislative prophecy (*nubuwwat al-tashrī'*). The latter is the *risālah*, the prophetic mission of the *rasūl* or messenger, whose mission is to announce the *Sharī'ah*—the Divine Law, the celestial Book which has descended into his heart—to

of the Exalted Reality, the Necessary, absolutely Rich and self-Subsisting. That absolute friendship is the goal, the desired 'trust' for which everything other than God the Exalted has been created. Now that absolute friendship, 'the goal' 'the trust' is called the Muḥammadan Reality¹ which is the Reality of the realities of things and the leader of all the beautiful leading [Divine] Names. So understand and become rich!

(737) His saying: *And the meaning of presented the trust* (33:72).

That is, if the substance of the 'trust' cannot bear [it], it cannot become the 'trust'. So understand!

(738) His saying: *The presenting [means] the acceptance of the emanation [as 'trust']*.

The secret of that is the creative existential emanation is precisely the same as the existence of man, the combiner of all combinations [of meanings], and it is precisely its accepting the existence and its command.

(739) His saying: *[It is at first] taken*.

Now something taken is returned as such, and vice versa. So comprehend.

(740) He said: *[then returned] to its people*.

We have indicated to something like this about this 'trust' and 'borrowing'. Our discussion there was about both stations: the station of foundation and the station of similitude, that taking is precisely the returning, and returning is precisely taking, as is the requisite of observing the gathering in dispersion itself, and vice versa. It is good to reflect [on it].

mankind. There have been many prophets (*anbiyā'*, sing. *nabī*) but six great messengers whose mission it was to announce the *Sharī'ah*, and they were, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad. The relation between the *walāyah*, the prophecy and the mission of the Messenger, or the relation between the person of the *walī* (the bearer of *walāyah*), the person of the prophet and the person of the messenger could be represented by three concentric circles, the *walāyah* is represented by the central circle, because it is the esoteric aspect of prophecy; the prophecy is represented by the middle circle, because it is the esoteric or 'inner' aspect of the mission of the messenger; and this mission is represented by the outer circle. So every *rasūl* is also *nabī* and *walī*. Every *nabī* is *walī*; the *walī* can only be *walī*. It follows that *walāyah* is more eminent than the quality of a prophet, and that this is more eminent than the quality of a messenger. However, though the Shi'i philosophers affirm the superiority of *walāyah*, they do not mean that the person of *walī* is superior to the person of the prophet and the messenger, because in concrete terms it is the messenger who takes precedence because he contains within himself all three qualities of *walī-nabī-rasūl*. Cf. Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London, 1991), tr. L. Sherrard, pp. 39–45.

1. Ibid.

(741) His saying: [*The man accepted the 'trust' because of*] *the weakness of his potency*.¹

It is said: 'Your existence is sin, to which no sin can be compared.'

It is said:

O! My heart is the enkindling of the fire of love,
The night of the moon is dark, the sun is the day.
Throw away the dust of sin, there is tomorrow
O weeping come, for the day of tears is today.

(741) He said: *The bearing [of 'trust'] basically pertains to the Perfect Man*. This from him [i.e. Ṣadrā] is an indication to the hidden secret treasured in the treasure of its people. That is, the Perfect Man is the combiner of all virtues and perfections; he is a treasury of meanings and the lofty attributes of God together with being absolutely the seal of the realities of things, their tenuousness and subtleties, the spiritual beings and their dense aspects such as the physical beings.

(742) His saying: *The man does injustice to himself*.² The pivot of that is what 'Alī [the first Shi'i Imam] (peace be upon him), the prayer-direction (*qiblah*) of the gnostics, said about the number of universal divine powers which are the succour of all the souls, majestic and lowly. [Such a soul has]: 'Endurance in annihilation, bliss in misfortune, richness in poverty, honour in dishonour and patience in affliction.' He (peace be upon him said): 'We praise him in His [giving us] calamity as we praise Him for His blessings.'

(743) His saying: [*because*] *he is ignorant about his soul*. The secret of that ignorance is the basis of far-reaching [kind of] someone being-ignorant about [his] ignorance. This is the ignorance about the reality of the human soul called 'divine Universality', the Universal Soul called the Lofty Essence of God, the High Loftiness, the Ṭūbā Tree (13:29), the Lote Tree of the Boundary, the Heaven of Refuge (53:14–15) in comparison to the gnosis of that reality. The knowledge of that reality called the lofty essence of God is not possible for anyone as his right except by attaining his knowledge through luminosity. Its knowledge—and it is the Universal Soul, the succour of all souls—through the luminosity is the knowledge through God the Exalted, as he [i.e. 'Alī] said: 'My knowledge through luminosity is the knowledge through God, and the knowledge through God is my knowledge

1. According to Ṣadrā's explanation his power was too weak to be preoccupied with anything other than the Absolute Beloved (God).

2. According to Ṣadrā, man's injustice to himself is that he subjugates by his will the soul [that commands evil]. This is injustice to his self in the positive sense as a result of which he attains Divine Bliss.

through the luminosity.' How could it not be? That Universal Soul known as lofty by its loftiness is called the lofty essence of God, and the description given about it is that it is 'the divine Universality'. So his way-station (peace be upon him) in the context of the human souls *qua* human souls is the way-station of reality and foundation, as the Prophet (the blessings of God be upon him and his progeny) also said in the context of human intellects that they two [that is he and 'Alī] are the fathers of this community, that is, the community which is all the Creation, high and low.¹

(744) His saying: *He also loves His Essence only.*²

It is derived that He the Exalted loves the Perfect Man, the combiner of all perfections of existence *qua* existence. That perfect one is the existent who is precisely the necessary existence of God, who endures after the annihilation of all things, as the Majestic One said through the speaker: *Every thing is to perish except His Face* (28:88). They (peace be upon them) say: We are the Face of God, enduring after the annihilation of things, majestic and lowly. According to that station, the man, the combiner of all [virtues], becomes a beloved of God the Exalted. Also he becomes the lover and seeker of Him the Exalted from the aspect of his seeking that station. Now in reality God the Exalted does not love except His enduring Face. And he whom the Exalted loves does not love except Him the Majestic and Exalted, for He is the First and the Last. So have insight.

(745) His saying: *This entails his ignorance of his Lord.*³

I say: In this [context] it is recorded in the *Biḥār al-anwār*⁴ in the narration of the 'hadīth of light' that Alī, the Commander of the Faithful (upon him be the most esteemed peace of God, the real evident Sovereign), the prayer-direction of the gnostics said: 'One does not know God except by the way of our knowledge'. The secret of all that is the manifestation of the Sublime by His exalted Attributes and His beautiful Names by the Muḥammadan Light⁵ which emanates first and by essence from the most sacred presence of the Essence of the 'absolute Oneness' (*aḥadiyyah*) of the Exalted. That pre-eternal, post-eternal everlasting Light is the pre-eternal epiphany of the Exalted on the temples of the concrete things. This is

1. Mullā Nūrī seems to be referring to the Muḥammadan Reality and *walāyah*. Cf. supra, p. 422, n. 2 for these concepts.

2. The context of this gloss is: Ṣadrā commenting on the verse, *God loves those who also love Him* [5:54] states that it is quite evident to the man of insight whom does God love. All the existents love themselves or their essences just as God also loves His Essence only; yet whoever loves other than God has gone astray from the Abrahamic path, and whoever loves Him, God also loves him.

3. This gloss is in the context of what Ṣadrā says that he who is ignorant about his self is ignorant about his Creator.

4. *Biḥār al-anwār* is a collection of the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Shi'i Imams collected by Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1799).

5. Cf. supra, p. 422 n. 2, for this concept.

made known by the Exalted to all things by [His] greatest 'Oneness' (*wāḥidiyyah*),¹ as is indicated in the saying of the Exalted: *There is not a thing but celebrates His praise* (17:44). It is said about it: 'In everything He has a sign indicating that He is One'. That Muḥammadan Light is the unity of the Reality by which the Sublime describes His essence as Oneness, as He said: *God bears witness that there is no god except Him* (3:18).

(746) His saying: *He is a theosophist [or a divine philosopher] (ta'allahu)*.² That is, all His servitude, and His majestic prostration which God commanded the higher angels, not just the lower ones, for the prostration to the vicegerent, the combiner of all the higher Attributes of God and His beautiful Names so that the leader of the leaders of the Names becomes the vicegerent for Him the Exalted. For the real concrete Name is the vicegerent called the Divinity and Lordship, and [later] in metaphysics [is understood] in the sense of servitude. For the Divinity is in the sense of loftiness, and the Lordship in the arc of descent and beginning is in the sense of servitude and prostration [to the Divinity] in the arc of ascent and end. Both these way-stations are the Muḥammadan way-station which are the shadow of God the Exalted and His Face by which the heavens and the earth are illuminated. They are precisely the Reality of the realities of all things.

(747) His saying: *[The attainment of self-knowledge] is not conceivable except by the transformation of [one's] being*.

I say: The gnostic at [his inner] transformation knows the secret of his saying (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny): 'He who knows his self has known his Lord'.³ For indeed the way-station of servitude to the Presence of the Lord is the way-station of the Core and Reality. It is [related] from 'Alī (peace be upon him): 'The reason is for holding to the servitude, [and] not for the perception of the Lordship'. It is evident that, that holding is inconceivable except by the transformation of the dark existence to the true existence. 'The servitude is a substance, its core is the Lordship'.

1. The 'absolute Oneness' and 'Oneness' are derived from the conception of Being according to the Spanish Muslim Sufi Ibn 'Arabi [d. 1240]. He gives some metaphysical levels of the Being or Existence. The most interior level of Being is the pure Existence and that is a great Mystery, essentially unknown and unknowable. The next level is 'absolute Oneness' about which one can say that it is 'one', not in the numerical sense. The next metaphysical stage is that of 'Oneness'. The relationship between all three levels of Existence is that of interior and exterior. The pure Existence is the interior of 'absolute Oneness' and the 'absolute Oneness' is the interior of 'Oneness'. Cf. T. Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 49–50.

2. This gloss is further elaboration of what Ṣadrā says that 'he who knows his essence and reality knows his Creator', therefore he is a divine philosopher, that is, a philosopher who has the spiritual experience of Reality. It is such a person who, according to Nūrī, is worthy of the prostration of the angels, and is the vicegerent of God on the earth.

3. *AM*, op.cit., no. 529.

(748) He said: *So the injustice and ignorance [for man who accepts the 'trust'] are [praise for him].*

As for the injustice, it is what 'Alī (peace be upon him), the prayer-direction of the gnostics, said about the description of the divine Universal [Soul that it has]: 'endurance in annihilation, bliss in misfortune, richness in poverty, honour in dishonour, patience in affliction.' As for the ignorance, it is what is being said: it begins by being veiled, and is concealed by the epiphanies. Be firm in it.

His saying: *So the injustice and ignorance [for man who accepts the 'trust'] are [praise for him].*

This from him [i.e. Ṣadrā] is as if it is an allusion to the level of the unification of the opposite, contradictory sides (*coincidentia oppositorum*), thereby that bodily power becomes [unified with] the psychic [power] in every respect. As it is said: 'For Him is the praise, and for you is the dispraise, for Him is the honey for you is the poison.'

So understand. There is some kind of allusion in it about the combination of two reports, i.e., the report by the reporter about the state of the two Shaykhs [i.e., the first two caliphs of the Muslims, Abū Bakr and 'Umar] in connection with their undertaking the trust of the caliphate of the Messenger of God (the blessing of God upon him and his progeny), and the 'Alī report in which the 'injustice' has been interpreted [grammatically] in intensification form 'as injustice to oneself', and 'ignorance' as man being obligated, made servile, is unknown for power. The first report unveils the dispraise, and the second the praise. So do not be heedless.

(749) His saying: *effaced in the existence of the Eternal.*¹
And all faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Eternal (20:111).

(750) He said: *They assume that they have an [independent] existence [and power]*²

It is derived from it that the authority of [the faculty of] estimation, which is the primordial nature (*fiṭrah*) of Satan, concealing the witnessing of the unfolding Light of the Merciful, and being hidden by the domination of its smoky innate-disposition, and the domination on it of the ruling-property of the element fire, covers the insight of man's primordial nature from witnessing the reality [of a thing] as it is. The secret of that is that man's primordial nature is an isthmus, a combiner of two troops, the troop of Satan and the troop of the Merciful. Now

1. This gloss and the following gloss are on some phrases in this 'rule' in which Ṣadrā gives another interpretation of the verse 33:72. According to this interpretation there is dispraise for man being unjust and ignorant. Ṣadrā explains that all contingent beings are subject to annihilation in the Absolute Being.

2. But the injustice on the part of some men to themselves is that they assume that their existence and power are independent of their Creator. This assumption, according to Ṣadrā, is caused by the domination of the estimative faculty [or fictitious imagination].

in the arc of descent the precedence of the lower over the eminent is essential. From here it entails the precedence of the intimacy of human primordial nature with the troop of Satan over the realization of its intimacy with the troop of the Merciful. The saying of the Exalted indicates to it in some hidden and subtle way: *Then there will be set up between them a wall with a gate, with mercy on its interior and punishment on its exterior* (57:13). Derivation: The exterior is a veil for the interior. So comprehend.

(751) His saying: *according to their assumption.*

The interpretation and the explanation of the meaning of this 'undertaking': The meaning derived from the 'undertaking' of the 'trust' according to this predication is their estimation of being independent in their beings without having reliance upon the Reality so there is no way-station of their existence from the presence of the existence of the sun of Reality. The reality of the way-station of the rays of Sun from the Sun itself is the epiphany of the light of its essence. It is evident that the epiphany of the light is His attribute subsistent by Him without disjunction from Him. So according to this predication the refusal to undertake [the 'trust'] is praise, a preferment and eminence, whereas the undertaking in itself is dispraise, deficiency and lowliness.

The 'undertaking' in this meaning is seen in what is recorded in the *ḥadīth* from our Imams (peace be upon them) when they ascribed the undertaking [of the 'trust'] to the first usurper [i.e., Abū Bakr, the first caliph of the Muslim community], and interpreted the 'injustice' as unjust treatment of 'Alī (peace be upon him), and 'ignorance' as him being unknown of his potential. By the life of my beloved! He was worthy of bearing [the trust], but the perception of his innermost self (lit. 'secret', *sirr*) is very difficult [to know], not possible for any one except a singular, unique, detached anchorite. Know that from the meaning of the first undertaking it is derived the preference of man over the rest of the creation as the bearer of the 'trust', and from [the meaning of] the second undertaking it is derived the preference of the rest of the creation including the beasts over man the bearer, the ignorant having the compound ignorance. So be firm, and wonder at everything astonishing.

(752) His saying: *There is no incompatibility between the two interpretations.*

It is quite probable that his intention by the undertaking [of the 'trust'] is the undertaking in the absolute [sense] so that it is sound to intend from it everything of praise and dispraise corresponding to it. Therefore, the undertaking in the form of intending the praise from it is the undertaking of the absolute Existence, that is, the presence of the Reality and the coming into existence of the wayfarer by that true Existence which entails the complete crumbling of the mount of his I-nesses which are other than God. Now in the form of dispraise, what is intended from it

is the undertaking of the determined existence which is the absolute futile estimation. It entails from it the concealment of the worshipper from witnessing the sun of Reality, and the non-existence of his disrobing the robes of estimative existence which is *like a mirage in a desert which the thirsty man supposes to be water* (24:39). If it is predicated as the absolute undertaking bifurcating [in two branches, one] towards the Reality and [one] towards something futile [i.e., the estimative faculty] then at every station it is intended what corresponds to it. Likewise in the case of 'injustice' and 'ignorance', as is evident.

(753) His saying: *The beginning implies the primordial nature.*¹

I say: All of his discourse in the context of his explanation here is symbolic, so from its external [explanation] its intention cannot be understood. The allusion to some kind of unveiling from his intention given symbolically and known among the scholars is, the primordial nature which they interpret as something originally non-existent ('adam) is that by which man is created. Though it is the primordial nature emanated first from the presence of the most-sacred essence of [the Divine] 'absolute Oneness', it is originally non-existent for the Creation.

The secret of that is, that primordial nature is the reality of the things and is Muḥammadan Reality which is the water about which He the Exalted said: *His Throne is upon the water* (11:7).

That water is the original element by which there is the life of every thing, and by which everything glorifies its Exalted Lord. As the Almighty said: *There is not a thing but celebrates His praise* (17:44). That primordial nature by which man is created is the primordial nature of the unity of the Reality by which the Glorified describes His eternal, unified essence as Oneness and Uniqueness. As He said: *God bears witness that there is no god except Him* (3:18). His messenger, the Seal [of prophecy] (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) said: 'There was God and there was nothing with Him'. His [great grand-] son Mūsā al-Kāzīm [the seventh Shi'i Imam] said in explaining the meaning of this symbolic prophetic [tradition]: 'Now also it is so.'

In sum, that primordial nature which is the true innate-disposition of man is the Muḥammadan Reality² which is His Unity, may glorified be His essence, and the 'absolute Oneness' itself before the existence of anything and their creation. This is the Face which will endure after the annihilation of all things. It is the First and the Last and it is the primordial eternal element. From it and by it all things

1. Glosses from 753 to 762 are on chapter three, first *mashhad* of *Asrār* of Ṣadrā. In this *mashhad* Ṣadrā discusses the primordial nature of man, his return to it, and the parallel degrees of the beginning and end of the primordial nature. The beginning according to Ṣadrā implies the primordial nature which is the original non-existence which he calls the 'heaven', and exiting from it is coming into existence.

2. Cf. supra, p. 422, n. 2 on Muḥammadan Reality and Muḥammadan Face.

are created from the Milky Way to the atom and from the atom to the Milky Way, and that is the white Muḥammadan pearl. The degree of that Muḥammadan Face which is the matter for the creation of things, and this is the Will which is created by itself then the things are created by it; it is the degree of the non-existence of all things at the beginning, and the degree of the annihilation of all things at the return. However this is the primordial nature of the unity of the Reality by which the mankind is created, nay all things are created by it. About that non-existence a reporter reports as if saying by the tongue of reality:

I escape from my existence to non-existence,
In non-existence I am the king and the master of knowledge.

That enduring Face called the Muḥammadan Light¹ and the Reality of realities of things is the Light from which and by which all lights are illuminated. They (peace be upon them) said: 'We are that Face which will endure after the annihilation of the things.' This is the primordial nature, and it is the ultimate goal about which it was said, and is said: 'There is no village after 'Abbādān' in wayfaring towards God, the sanctified and exalted. So understand and preserve what we have indicated here, be rich, and be among the grateful ones, and do not become from the deceivers who are veiled from witnessing the flow of the Light of divine Unity in everything, as the Exalted said: *God is the Light of the heavens and the earth* (24:35), and He said: *And the earth illuminates*, that is, the earth of space, *by the Light of its Lord* (39:69). So the Muḥammadan Reality is the beginning, that is, that from which is the existence of things, and not the end from which is their existence. Hence it is the true Hereafter, and it is primordial.

(754) His saying: *It is the heaven*.

That means that place of fall is that heaven. And that heaven consists of two worlds, the celestial spiritual world, and the celestial world of Form. The fall from that heaven to the world without mediation and distance is indeed the fall from the heaven of Form which is overpowered in the ascending and descending degrees by the heaven of the 'companions of the right' who are resurrected in the bodily Forms and frames. [That world] is known [by the gnostics] as the imaginal world which is between the two worlds: the spiritual world of intellectual meaning and the natural bodily material world.

(755) His saying: *in which was our father Adam*.

His intention behind Adam is the Muḥammadan Universal Intellect,² and from Ḥawā [Eve] the Universal Soul called the most sublime and the Mother of Book,

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

[as He the Exalted said:] *and it is with Us in the Mother of Book [and it is] surely sublime and wise* (43:4). That Soul is the divine universality called the 'Heaven of Refuge', the 'Ṭūbā Tree', and the 'Lote Tree of the Boundary' (13:29; 53:14–15) whose form is the sphere of Pedestal.

(756) He said: *[Returning to the primordial nature is returning from this] metaphorical existence to non-existence.*

Know that the worlds of the Presence of Existence are three: the most hidden world, the true Reality, and this is the degree of the presence of the most-holy, the Exalted; the world of Command interpreted as 'Be' and relative Reality, and this is the degree of exaltedness and true Lordship preceding the existence of things; and the world of Creation which has three degrees: the spiritual *jabarūt* (Invincible), the *malakūt* (Dominion) of Forms disengaged from [the physical matter], and the world of *mulk* and witnessing, known as the natural world and the temporal world of material body. It is evident that these three worlds are posterior to the world of Command and relative Reality not to speak of the true exalted Reality, and they could not be existent in the degree prior to it, that is, the world of Command interpreted as 'Be'. So the degree of 'Be' will be the degree of non-existence of things divided into the universal, holy spirits of *jabarūt*, the imaginative souls of *malakūt* having Forms, and the natural, material bodies [of the physical world]. All these created worlds are non-existent in that preceding degree. Hence that degree preceding them is called the world of Command, Origination, and Creation, and it is the primordial nature. For, it is the degree of existentiality of the things, and it is the degree of the eternal Face of God.

(757) He said: *[This occurs first by] the non-existence of the physical mould [or body] at natural death.*

At natural death, and it is the death of the body, there will be the Hour of the minor Resurrection; at the non-existence of the soul there will be the Hour of the intermediary Resurrection, and at the non-existence of the spirit there will be the Hour of the major Resurrection.

(758) His saying: *[then by] the non-existence of the soul.*

By this 'non-existence' it is meant the transformation of the formal imaginal existence of *malakūt* disengaged from the hyllic matter and temporal period to the spiritual existence disengaged from the Form, matter and time, and which is intermediary between the eternal divine world and the psychic world of transient time and Form well known as the 'Day of the Lord'.

That intermediary world is a spiritual isthmus (*barzakh*) between the true existence and the contingent disengaged existence of Form and material existence. By the terrifying blast [of the Trumpet blown by Seraphiel] the spirits will transfer from the mould [or bodies] of Form to that intermediary world which is not the

true [world]. Then at the stupefying blast [of the Trumpet by Seraphiel] those spirits will transfer to the true existence which is the world of the Face of God, enduring by the endurance of God the Exalted.

(759) His saying: *at the terror of death.*

So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā (20:12). For the spiritual world is the domicile detached from the two worlds [of malakūt and mulk], the entire earth will be in His fist on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens, scrolled in His right [hand] (39:67).

(760) His saying: *[By the death of the soul man becomes worthy of] the heaven of perfect ones.*

By 'perfect ones' he intends the divine philosophers. Among the unitarians there are divine philosophers [or theosophists] but there is a great difference between the two. The sign of becoming divinely in the worldly existence is divine philosopher acquiring the habitude of taking off the body. The way-station of the body for the divine philosopher is like the shirt, whenever he wills he wears it and whenever he wills he takes it off.

(761) His saying: *the ascent of the Logos.*¹

To Him good logi [words] ascend, and He elevates the righteous deed (35:10). For al-luding to the descent and return together,² He said: Were We exhausted by the first creation? Verily they are in confusion about the new creation (50:15). So understand with contemplation on it.

(762) He said: *The Exalted One [said]: in it the angels and Spirit descend.*³

Hā, Mīm (44:1) means Muḥammad (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny), by the manifest Book (44:2) means 'Alī (peace be upon him), indeed We sent it down (44:3), that is the light of the Book, on a blessed night (44:3), [that is] Fāṭimah, peace be upon her, in which every matter is determined (44:4), that is, Imam after Imam from the son of Fāṭimah, peace be upon her. The way-station of Muḥammad (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) is [like] the way-station of Universal Intellect, the way-station of 'Alī (peace be upon him)

1. This gloss is in the context of resurrection which according to Ṣadrā's explanation, based on his interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān is that, at first the light of the sun will be extinguished; this according to him is interpreted as 'the Night of the Power'; then there will be the ascent of the Word [Logos] which according to him is interpreted as the Day of Resurrection.

2. That is, descent from the primordial nature and return to it.

3. Qur'ān 97:4. This gloss is on chapter 97 of the Qur'ān. Mullā Nūrī further elaborates it by his theosophical commentary on chapter 43:1–4 of the Qur'ān. It alludes to 'Alī, the spiritual inheritor of the Prophet according to the Shi'i theology, his wife Fāṭimah the daughter of the Prophet, and the progeny of the Prophet from 'Alī and Fāṭimah, the Shi'i Imams.

is [like] the way-station of Universal Soul which is the vicegerent of Universal Intellect, the way-station of Fāṭimah Zahrā, peace be upon her, is [like] the way-station of Absolute Body, and the way-station of the Imams (peace be upon them) is [like] the way-station of the Scrolls, descended, transcribed, and emerged from the Mother of Book which is that divine universality called the exalted Essence of God. The rest of the Books are the souls of the prophets; they are the affairs derived from those universal divine Scrolls. The souls of our Imams (peace be upon them) are the complete *Words* [*logi*] (6:34) which combine all the *logi*. They (peace be upon them) are the foundations, and the rest of the prophets (peace be upon them), and the Friends [or men of God, *awliyā'*] (peace be upon them) are their branches.

(763) His saying: *The Hour of the minor Resurrection*.¹

The Hour of the minor Resurrection like a day combines the hours; the intermediary Hour is like a week for the days, and the major Hour is the major calamity. It is the combining of seven weeks, like a complete perfect year, *raiser of ranks, possessor of the Throne* (24:15). The day in which we are at present is reckoned as one thousand years, the week as seven thousand years, and the year as fifty thousand years. It is the combination of seven weeks and their enveloping, just as the day envelops the hours and the week envelops the days, and all of them are enveloped by the Day of Gathering, just as the prophet-hood of each prophet revolves around a day other than Friday from the days [of the week] except their Seal (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) who is the enveloper of all in all, so understand. He the Exalted said: *O you who believe! When the call is made for prayer on Friday, hurry toward the remembrance of God* (62:9), i.e. when called to connect with Muḥammad and his progeny the inheritors of his perfection then hurry towards them. The intention behind 'those who believe' is the absolute creation from the souls (*anfus*) and horizons [or the external world] (*āfāq*). That 'womb' which God the Exalted has obligated to connect is the 'womb' of God, because they are the [spiritual] progeny of God the Exalted.

His saying: *The hour of the minor Resurrection*.

It is quite possible that by that it is intended what He the Exalted said: *The Day the earth is transformed into another earth* (14:48), and the saying of He the Exalted: *Everyone on it is ephemeral* (55:26), is the minor Resurrection, and from His saying: *the heavens scrolled in His right [hand]* (39:67) is the intermediary [Resurrection], and from His saying: *The earth will illuminate by the light of its Lord* (39:69), and

1. The glosses from 763 to 768 are from chapter three, second *mashhad*, first rule, of *Asrār* on some concepts. In this 'rule' Ṣadrā discusses the knowledge of the Hour of Resurrection and the secret of Resurrection. He speaks about three resurrections for every creature, the minor when natural death occurs, the middle which relates to the intermediate world (*barzakh*) and the major which relates to the world of the spirit.

like His saying: *To whom does the sovereignty belong today? To God the One the Victorious* (40:16), it is the major [Resurrection].

(764) His saying: *as if it [i.e. the Resurrection] has happened for them.*¹ As if he is alluding to what is said that it begins by being veiled and is hidden by the epiphanies.

(765) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: None shall manifest it its time.*² That time is the time about which it is reported from him (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny): 'I have a time with God when neither a cherub, nor a dispatched prophet has access to me'.³ He (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) is from the dispatched prophets. He [i.e. Muḥammadan Reality] is the eternal time which is the pre-eternity and post-eternity. He, as explained earlier, is the vessel for the primordial nature whose degree precedes the existence of all things. He is precisely the same as the next reality which is the ultimate goal and eternity of all things. He is the degree of obliteration of the estimative [faculty] and the objects of estimation, and of sobriety in knowledge and the objects of knowledge. He is subsistent by God after the annihilation of all that is other than God the Exalted. He is the world near [to God] and [His] lofty threshold above after which there is no threshold. He is the Muḥammadan Veil by which the things are hidden from witnessing their Exalted Lord though their beings are immersed in the Presence of the Exalted. O the One hidden due to His extreme manifestation! He is hidden from the beholders of His creation by the rays of His Light called Muḥammadan Light.

It is given in *al-Kāfī*:⁴ 'Muḥammad is the Veil of God'. He (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) by His existence and His Light preceding all contingents is the great Hour itself and the major Resurrection. Just as he (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) by his divine reality is the primordial nature itself of man, that is, the major Resurrection from which is the beginning and end. *It is the primordial nature of God on which He originated mankind* (30:30).

(766) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: It will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth* (7:187).

This is an allusion to their refusal to bear the 'trust' which [was born] by the Muḥammadan primordial nature of man, which is precisely the same as the major

1. This gloss is further elaboration of the text of *Asrār* in which Ṣadrā remarks that there are people who have doubt about the happening of the Hour of Resurrection, but those who have faith in it bear witness to it as if it has happened for them.

2. Qur'ān 7:187. This gloss is the elaboration of the text of *Asrār* that the knowledge of the Hour of Resurrection is known only to God.

3. Cf. *AM*, no. 100.

4. *Uṣūl al-kāfī*, in short *al-Kāfī*, is a major work on the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Shi'i Imams collected by al-Kulaynī (d. 940).

Hour from the aspect of reality. The difference between [the two] is, [the former is] the beginning [and the latter] is the end, as discussed at another time.

(767) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: Say, I have no control over [any benefit] for myself.*¹

As if he [i.e. the Prophet] was the beholder of the annihilation in the Oneness [of God] which is the requisite of the affair of the major Hour, for the happening of major Resurrection will be at the annihilation of Muḥammadan man called the macrocosm. So it is good to contemplate.

(768) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: And are seized from a close place.*² The secret of that 'close' is in time and place, and that is the existential encompassing which is the spirit of its meaning and kernel of its essence. It means the presence of the Hour is very near to every soul, nay, for everything from itself. And how could it not be? For the Day of Resurrection is the Divine Universal Day; it is the simple universal encompassment which scrolls the heavens and the earth including what is in the two with their spaciousness. The time and space and their people with the width of the two and their extensions in it by comparison to it is the scrolling of the successive times in the now without finality and the rolling up of the dispersed, scattered spaces in a point. That is according to what He said: *The entire earth will be in His fist on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens, scrolled, in His right [hand]* (39:67).

Contrary to that spiritual encompassment of nearness there is the distance which is contrary and contradictory to it, and it is the estimative distance of the object of estimation imagined by the estimative [faculty] of those veiled by the veils of the heavens and the earth, imprisoned in the gatherings of times and places which are the basis of the perception of their perceiving sensory organ, and the axis of their intellects subject [or servile] to their senses.

(769) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: When the earth will be rocked with a terrible quake.*³

[There are verses] like this which mention the word 'when' which, when implied in the past tense, it indicates as if the end is precisely the beginning. The combining of 'when' with the future tense with the past tense unveils the gathering of the beginning

1. Qur'ān 10:49. This text of *Asrār* is on the Hour of Resurrection about which God reveals to the Prophet that when people inquire about the time of happening of the Hour, he should say that he has no knowledge of it for its knowledge is with God alone.

2. Qur'ān 34:51. The text of *Asrār* for this gloss is about those who have faith in the happening of the Hour and witness it from close.

3. Qur'ān 99:1. The glosses from 769 to 792 are on chapter three, the second *mashhad*, the second rule of *Asrār*. In this 'rule' Ṣadrā explains the secret of Resurrection, its time and place. In the glosses from 769 to 772 Nūrī gives further comments on the verses of the Qur'ān commented by Ṣadrā explaining the beginning of the Resurrection at the quaking of the earth.

and the return. It has been discussed earlier that the primordial nature and the beginning of things is the non-existence ('*adam*'), as he (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny) said: 'There was God and there was nothing with Him.' Likewise is the end of the things from the souls (*anfus*) and horizons [i.e. external world] (*āfāq*).

(770) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: And throws out what is in it, emptying itself* (84:4).

Its derivation according to what has reached us from the pillars of philosophy and sultans of the kingdom of *walāyah* and [spiritual] inheritance is: it strips off the imprisonments, attachments and determinations which are the limits of existences and veils concealing the witnessing of the Presence of the [Divine] Essence, and rises from the perigee of the metaphorical beings which are the channel [leading towards] the Reality till the summit of apogee and the Reality of realities in the things, as we have investigated in the case of heaven.

The summary of the derivation is the transformation of the metaphorical being in its degrees ordered in descent, and its return to the true divine Reality. Its way-station from the metaphorical beings is the way-station leading to its core and reality from its images, shadows and forms. Now the imitative aspect of descent from the Reality will return to It, which will be at the happening of the Hour when everything will return to its root. The root of roots of beings, and the element of elements of concrete beings is that Muḥammadan Light called *Alif* [the first letter of the Arabic alphabet] of unfolding mercy. By the absolute *Alif* the [rest of] the letters are manifested in simple forms. Then there manifests the forms of complete composite word from the elements of those simple pillars which are of four kinds—earth, water, air and fire. The 'words' [or *logi*, i.e. the intelligible Forms] are the realities of things that descend by the permission of their Lord and imaginize in the Forms of those metaphorical beings. Then they return to the degree called the 'point of oneness' expressed as 'Muḥammadan Reality'; it is the manifestation of the most-sacred presence of the Essence of 'absolute Oneness', and its major epiphany by Oneness. It is the pre-eternal morning, and the post-eternal Hour. This, and after that in the corners of station there are mysteries and secrets which may not be reckoned, and our capacity is to manifest this in allusion to it, in some detail at the same time in summary. He is the Protector of grace and Disposer of grace.

Further, O the companion of insight! Know that the ready cash that we have realized and derived here is indeed the explanation of the state of things at the obliteration of their metaphorical [beings] and in general their complete annihilation when nothing will remain with them except the enduring Face of God after the annihilation of things. As for the return, that is the return of the things after their annihilation to their existences by which they are raised and resurrected, they enter the Garden [or Paradise], and that is the eternal Garden, and the Fire made

eternal. But for now we will not present its explanation except in comprehensive allusion, and that is our saying: 'It is something beyond in the nooks' etc. So do not be heedless.

(771) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: And it [i.e. the earth] gives ear to its Lord* (84:5).

That is: It heard and followed His command, and its I-ness crumbled at the epiphany of the Presence of 'absolute Oneness' by the major Oneness. The saying of *He the Majestic: and it should*, (84:5), that is, its metaphorical I-ness [should] change and transform to the real I-ness, and its metaphorical existence transform to the true existence which is its reality. We have established earlier that the Muḥammadan Light also called the Muḥammadan Reality is the Face of God enduring after the annihilation of all things. It is the Reality of realities in things. It is the Greatest Name (*ism a'zam*) of God, the Imam of the Imams of Names. The Names of the Exalted are the reality of the realities of things. From them the things originated, and to them is their return.

(772) His saying: *He the Sublime [said]: and it [i.e. the earth] should* (84:5).

In each of the two cases it is said for its interpretation: Making the reality of following and listening to His Command is His saying: Be! (*kun*). So the Command is the Command of Creation and not the command of Law, as He the Sublime said: *Indeed His Command when He wills something, is to say to it: Be! And it is* (36:82). As for the interpretation which we have established for explaining the derivation of meaning is also interpreted as what he [i.e. Ṣadrā] has interpreted which is something concealed from the first one, concealed from those who are not worthy of it. For it is one of the inner levels of his interpretations, resembling the inner of the inner [levels] of meanings when he interpreted it, and the end of the levels for him as if it was the primary meaning of this noble [verse]. For every verse [of the Qur'ān] has exoteric, esoteric, limits and the primary meanings. So contemplate.

(773) His saying: *Allāh, Allāh*.¹

The repetition of this majestic word is symbolic. The number [i.e. the numeric value] of letters in the two [words] is one hundred and thirty-two corresponding to the number [or the numeric value] of the word 'heart' (*qalb*). The heart of the whole world is its quintessence. Now the heart of the whole world is man, the combiner of all realities of things. It is the Logos that combines and completes [the

1. This phrase is from a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, quoted by Ṣadrā, in which he is reported to have said: 'As long as there is someone on earth who says *Allāh Allāh*, the Resurrection will not take place'. Cf. the collection of *ḥadīth* of the Prophet compiled by Tirmidhī (d. 892), *Sunnah Tirmidhī*, (Beirut, n.d.) vol. 4, p. 492.

intelligible Forms] of God. That man, the unifier of the exalted Attributes of God and His beautiful Names in the station of the divine vicegerency is the presence of the Muḥammadan Seal, and the presences that are the inheritors of his perfection (the blessing of God be upon him and his progeny). The intention behind it is the 'proof', the 'proof' of God by which the heavens and the earth are firmly connected, and at the lifting of the 'proof' from the face of the earth, the Command reverts to the Resurrection, and the Hour takes place.

(774) His saying: *comes before [the presence of the Creator]*.¹
That is, he becomes annihilated in the witnessing of the [divine] Presence.

(775) His saying: *then the Resurrection becomes evident [for him]*.
This also includes the intermediary Resurrection. The intermediary Resurrection, i.e. its world, is considered in some respect as the Garden of the proximate ones from the most perfect prophets and the Friends [or men of God, *awliyā*]. As for the major Resurrection, i.e. its world, it is considered in some respect as the Garden of the specific one [comprising] the Seal of Muḥammadan presence and his progeny (the blessing of God be upon them) from the aspect of *walāyah* [Friendship with God].

1. The context of this gloss is the text of *Asrār* in which Ṣadrā explains that the Resurrection becomes evident for a believer when he breaks the veils [over his soul] which conceal the Reality and comes before the presence of His Creator.

Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī

The most famous philosopher of the Qajar period and considered by traditional authorities to be, along with Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī, Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā’ī and Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī (Zunūzī), the greatest representative of the School of *al-ḥikmah al-muta‘āliyah* or Transcendent Philosophy/Theosophy of that era, Ḥājī (pronounced Ḥāji in Persian) Mullā Hādī ibn Mahdī Sabzawārī (also known as Sabzawārī) was born in the city of Sabzawar in Khurasan in 1212/1797. He started his education in that city at a very young age and was a precocious child. It is said that he wrote a short treatise when he was only seven years old. Having lost his father when he was only eight, he was left in the care of his cousin Mullā Ḥusayn Sabzawārī who was a religious scholar. This relative took the young Hādī, when the latter was ten years old, to Mashhad where Hādī spent ten years in a *madrasah* in which he studied Arabic and the religious sciences especially Islamic Law. Then at the age of twenty he returned to Sabzawar to prepare himself for making the *ḥajj* and with that goal in mind set out for Isfahan, which at that time was still the intellectual centre in Persia.

Once in Isfahan, Mullā Hādī met the two great masters of the School of Mullā Ṣadrā who were still teaching in that city, that is, Mullā ‘Alī Nūrī and his student Mullā Ismā‘īl Iṣfahānī, and decided to stay there to study with them. With these venerable teachers he studied Islamic philosophy and especially the works of Mullā Ṣadrā, such as *al-Asfār al-arba‘ah* (The Four Journeys) and *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* (Divine Witnesses). Concurrently he also studied Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with the famous Shi‘i scholar Āqā Muḥammad ‘Alī Najafī. While a student in Isfahan, Mullā Hādī lived an austere and ascetic life, although he came from a wealthy family, and gave most of his money to the poor.

After this period of study in Isfahan Mullā Hādī returned to Mashhad where he taught both the religious and the intellectual sciences, especially philosophy, but he did not find the ambience of Mashhad to be as congenial for the teaching of philosophical subjects as Isfahan. It is interesting to note that while in Mashhad, he taught

his own philosophical poem (*al-Manẓūmah*) which he had already composed while in Isfahan. His own commentary on this difficult poem was not, however, written until much later in 1261/1845. In 1247/1831–1832, being dissatisfied with the conditions in Mashhad, he returned to Sabzawar, prepared again for the *hajj* and finally made the pilgrimage to Mecca the next year. It was an arduous journey during which he lost his wife. Moreover, his returning to Persia coincided with the death of the king, Fath 'Alī Shāh, and for a while travelling within the country became dangerous. So Mullā Hādī decided to stay in Kerman until the dust settled. He stayed for a year in that city, hiding his real identity and scholarly rank. He worked as a simple waiter in a tea-house devoting himself fully to spiritual practices.

Sabzawārī's stay in Kerman terminated in 1252/1836–1837 at which time he returned to the city of his birth where he was to spend the rest of his life except for a period of some ten months spent in Mashhad. Ḥājji Mullā Hādī began to teach in the Faṣḥiyyah *madrasah* in Sabzawar, a school much of which still survives, and he continued his classes to the end of his life. His fame soon spread throughout Persia, and even beyond its borders, and students began to flock to his classes from not only various parts of Persia itself but also from Iraq, Turkey, Caucasia, the Indian Subcontinent and even as far as Tibet. Because of him alone, Sabzawar became a major centre for the study of Islamic philosophy vying for many decades with Isfahan and Tehran. Sabzawārī's fame was so great that the Persian king Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh stopped in Sabzawar on his way to pilgrimage to Mashhad and met with the celebrated sage. The king asked him to write a treatise in Persian on *ḥikmat* and Sabzawārī complied and composed an important philosophical work entitled *Asrār al-ḥikam* (The Secrets of Wisdom) that he dedicated to the king. The Shah also ordered the royal photographer to take a picture of Sabzawārī, which still survives and which is the oldest photograph we have of a Persian philosopher.

Sabzawārī died suddenly in 1289/1872 after a long life dedicated to teaching and writing. He was buried outside the city near the Nayshāpūr Gate and his mausoleum still stands in that site, visited continuously throughout the year by pilgrims from near and far, his tomb being considered by the ordinary people who visit it with veneration as the resting-place of not only a famous philosopher and sage but also, and primarily, of a man of God, a saint. He was indeed a major intellectual figure, but also in addition a saintly man and a mystic who impressed those who saw him not only with his intellectual power and philosophical acumen, but also with the spiritual light and grace that emanated from his holy presence.

Sabzawārī was at once a philosopher and scholar of religious sciences and moreover an accomplished poet who wrote many philosophical and religious works in both Persian and Arabic, like a few of his illustrious predecessors such as Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī.

Sabzawārī wrote over fifty treatises in Arabic and Persian. Most of those texts deal with the philosophy of the Ṣadrian School of which he was a faithful follower.

But he also wrote on jurisprudence; what in English would be called theology, although, like Mullā Ṣadrā, he was opposed to *kalām*; and on literature in addition to writing poetry. Moreover, he composed important commentaries on several works of Mullā Ṣadrā and some of the Shi'i devotional works and also wrote an important commentary on the difficult verses of the *Mathnawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, which is one of the most pertinent commentaries upon this seminal work of Sufism to have been written during the Qajar period.

The most famous work of Sabzawārī is *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* (Commentary upon the Poem). The poem itself, which summarizes Ṣadrian philosophy in rhyming couplets, was so difficult that Sabzawārī himself wrote a commentary upon it and, furthermore, added glosses to his own commentary. In its final form, consisting of the poem, the commentary and the glosses, this book became almost immediately a very popular text for the teaching of Islamic philosophy in traditional circles and remains so to this day. Numerous commentaries and glosses have been written upon it from the time of Sabzawārī to the present. To this day when traditional teachers say, 'Hājī has said', they are referring to Sabzawārī and usually this work. When in the 1970s I was discussing the difficulty of this text with 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'i, I asked this great master of Islamic philosophy why he did not write a work to replace the *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, some of which I had studied with him and other traditional teachers. After insistence on my part, he accepted the challenge and wrote the treatise *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah* (The Beginning of Philosophy) and again because of my persistence a second treatise *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah* (The End of Philosophy). These two works have now become very popular in Qom and other centres where traditional Islamic philosophy is taught and have to some extent replaced the *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, but this latter work still remains popular.

Besides the *Asrār al-ḥikam*, which has been already mentioned, Sabzawārī's philosophical works include commentaries and glosses upon such works of Mullā Ṣadrā as the *Asfār*, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād* (The Origin and the End) and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Keys to the Invisible World). Another category of Hājī's writing concerns some of the beautiful prayers that are part and parcel of the religious life of pious Shi'a and are said to have originated with the Shi'i Imams. In this category it is especially important to note the *Sharḥ du'a' al-jawshan al-kabīr* (Commentary upon the Supplication 'the Great Coat of Armour') known also as *Sharḥ al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* (Commentary upon the Beautiful Names [of God]). Attributed to the Prophet of Islam, who transmitted it to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, this work contains a thousand Divine Names and Attributes clustered in groups of ten and is a major text of both Shi'i piety and gnosis. It is considered by some to be Sabzawārī's greatest work. Sabzawārī also wrote an Arabic poem on the inner meaning of religious rites as well as a *dīwān* of Persian poetry consisting of more than 1,700 verses in the form of *ghazals*, *mathnawīs*, *rubā'īs*, etc.

The intellectual heritage that Sabzawārī left behind cannot be limited to his books but must include the many students whom he trained and through whom his influence, especially as transmitted orally, can be found in Iran even today. Because of his immense knowledge and magnetic personality, he drew many students to him. Soon they became so numerous that he had to devise an examination for them, after which he would teach the more prepared students himself and the rest he would leave in the hands of his own advanced students. Sabzawārī would teach each group for seven years during which the works of Mullā Ṣadrā especially *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfī* (Commentary upon the Principles of al-Kāfī [the Sufficient]), *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, *al-Mashā'ir* (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations) and, on the highest level, the *Asfār* were taught along with Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The Theosophy of the Orient of Light) with the commentary of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, and some texts of philosophical *kalām* by Sayyid Sharif Jurjānī and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī along with his own *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*. His teaching and discussions of these texts usually combined philosophical rigour with gnostic intuitions and were usually combined with the citation of the Sufi poetry of such masters as 'Aṭṭār, Rūmī and Ḥāfiz.

Sabzawārī possessed great piety and had attained a high spiritual station and so taught his students intellectually as well as training them spiritually. He expected the highest ethical standards from them and those close to him were deeply affected by both his philosophical expositions and spiritual presence. His students therefore include as diverse figures as Sulṭān 'Alī Shāh Gunābādī, the founder of a major branch of the Ni'matullāhī Sufi order that is still widespread in present-day Iran, the philosopher Ḥakīm 'Abbās Dārābī, best known for his commentary upon Mīr Findiriskī's famous *qaṣīdah* (*charkh bā in akhtarān...* mentioned in the section on Mīr Findiriskī), Adīb Pishawārī, the foremost authority of his day on Persian literature, and such famous Shī'ī religious scholars and jurists as Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāzīm Khurāsānī and Faḍil-i Yazdī.

Philosophically Sabzawārī was a faithful follower of Mullā Ṣadrā. That is why to this day in traditional circles his *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* is usually studied as a stepping-stone for the study of the *Asfār*. Like Mullā Ṣadrā, Ḥājī emphasized ontology and accepted the Ṣadrian doctrine of the unity, principiality and gradation of *wujūd* as the foundation of ontology and furthermore, criticized severely the views of the opponents of this doctrine such as Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsā'ī. Sabzawārī added, however, some proofs for this central doctrine that one does not find explicitly in Mullā Ṣadrā. Sabzawārī was also especially interested in epistemology and the significance of presential knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*). In his discussion of knowledge Sabzawārī even criticized the views of Mullā Ṣadrā concerning the status of 'ilm or knowledge. Whereas in some of his works Ṣadr al-Dīn considered 'ilm to be a category of quality belonging to the soul, Sabzawārī considered 'ilm to be above any categories and to be within the very substance of the soul.

Sabzawārī had direct knowledge of the philosophy of Suhrawardī and Mīr Dāmād independent of Mullā Ṣadrā's writings but his knowledge of Ibn 'Arabī and his school depended mostly on Mullā Ṣadrā. Sabzawārī also had a special affinity with Suhrawardī whose discoveries of the sages of ancient Persia as a source for philosophical thought in Islam are reflected in Ḥājjī's works where reference is made to the ancient pre-Islamic Persian sages as al-Pahlawīyyūn or Pahlawī philosophers whom he associates with the doctrine of the principality and gradation of *wujūd*.

Altogether Sabzawārī is one of the most important intellectual figures of the thirteenth/nineteenth century in the Islamic world. Thanks to him and a few other figures, the intellectual life of Persia continued to be dominated by the Islamic philosophical tradition at a time when in much of the rest of the Islamic world pale imitations of various strands of Western philosophy were becoming dominant at least in many educated circles. Combining philosophical rigour with sanctity and theoretical metaphysical knowledge with its realization in the being of the philosopher who possessed such knowledge, Sabzawārī became a model for a true *ḥakīm*. His writings became widely read and studied by those seeking knowledge of Islamic philosophy and his students spread his teachings far and wide, commentaries being written on his works, especially the *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, up to our own day by such later philosophers as Mīrẓā Mahdī Āshtiyānī, Ākhūnd Hīdājī, Muḥammad Taqī Āmulī and Murṭadā Muṭahhari. Above all Sabzawārī himself became a supreme exemplar of the true sage for the larger Persian cultural milieu. His influence is still very much present in Persian society today.

Included here are sections of *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*. Among the topics discussed are the self evident nature of existence. Sabzawārī tells us 'All defining terms of "existence" are but explanations of the word; they can neither be a "definition" nor a description'. Other topics include the nature of existence as a fundamental reality, the existence of degrees in the gradual increase of intensity of the levels of existence, and the concept of unity of existence.

Further sections discuss such topics as existence being analogical and added to quiddity and how the Absolute is Pure Existence. Sabzawārī's rather dense discourse ends here with a discussion on Truth, God's Essence and its sameness as His Existence and the chain of being and its eventual end.

Sharḥ al-manẓūmah

Reprinted from Hājji Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* (from *Ghurar al-farā'id*), tr. Mehdi Mohaghegh and Toshihiko Izutzu as *The Metaphysics of Sabzavārī* (Delmar, NY, 1977), pp. 31–54.

I. Existence is Self-Evident

All defining terms of 'existence' are but explanations of the word; they can neither be a 'definition' nor a 'description'

This chapter is concerned with the self-evident nature of 'existence'; it explains how 'existence' defies real definition, and how all that has been said about it by way of definition is nothing but literal definition (i.e., explication of the word-meaning).¹

All (so-called) *defining terms of 'existence'* like, for example, 'self-subsistent' or 'that which allows of predication', etc., *are but explanations of the word*, i.e., so many answers given to the question concerning the lexical explanation of the word. This is the kind of thing which is called in Persian *Pāsukh-i pursish-i nakhustīn* (an answer to the first [i.e. the most elementary preliminary] question [concerning the meaning of a word]).

The Shaykh al-Ra'īs (Ibn Sīnā, Avicenna) states in his *Najāt*:² Existence cannot possibly be explicated except lexically, because it is the primary (primitive) principle for all explications. So it itself does not allow of any explication; rather, its (essential) form is in the mind without the mediation of anything (else).

So *they*, i.e., all (so-called) definitions, *can neither be a 'definition'* in view of the fact that 'existence' is (absolutely) simple, having neither specific difference nor genus, as we shall see presently: *nor* can it be a '*description*' because a '*description*' is obtainable only by an accidental property which is part of the five universals³

1. The 'defining terms' (*mu'arrif*) in general are of two kinds: (1) 'definition' (*ḥadd*), and (2) 'description' (*rasm*). The 'definition' consists of genus and proximate differentia, e.g., 'rational animal' for 'man'. The 'description' consists of genus and proprium, e.g., 'laughing animal' (i.e., and animal capable of laughing) for 'man'.

2. Ibn Sīnā, known in the West as Avicenna (d. 428/1037), is one of the greatest philosophers of Islam. Basing himself on the Aristotelian tradition of Greek philosophy as it had been handed down through the neo-Platonic commentators, he built up an encyclopedic system of Peripatetic philosophy that has thenceforth dominated the entire history of Islamic philosophy. His major work is the *Shifā'*, of which *Najāt* is an epitome.

3. 'Five universals', i.e., (1) genus, (2) differentia (or specific difference), (3) species, (4) proprium, and (5) common accident. For example, (1) 'animal', (2) 'rational', (3) 'man', (4) 'laughing', and (5) 'walking'. The 'five universals' are dealt with in Islamic philosophy under the special heading of *Isāghūjī* (Greek: *Eisagoge*).

whose division itself is based on the thing-ness¹ of 'quiddity', while 'existence' and its properties derive from an entirely different source of 'quiddity'.

Furthermore, a defining term must always be more immediately known and clearer than the defined term. But nothing is more evident than 'existence'.

Its notion is one of the best-known things, but its deepest reality is in the extremity of hiddenness

Its notion, i.e., the notion of 'existence' *is one of the best-known things, but its deepest reality*, i.e., the simple luminous reality whose mode of being, as required by its 'essence', is (1) the refusal of 'non-existence' and (2) being the prime source of all the effects that are to be expected from the existent things, and for which that self-evident notion is the formal mark, *is in the extremity of hiddenness*.

In this verse, the author has harmonized the theses of those who assert that the notion of 'existence' is self-evident, and of those who hold (the most fundamental reality of) 'existence', is absolutely inconceivable. (The latter thesis is based on the argument that) if *its* reality (of 'existence') were actualized in the mind, the result would be either (1) that its effects would be actualized (externally) – but if so, such an effect would not have been actualized at all in the mind. This is the case, because a mental existent does not produce the (external) kind of effects which are to be expected of it;² (2) or that it would not be followed by (the actualization of) its effects—but in that case it would not be 'existence' in the real sense of the word, 'existence' being the very source of (presupposed by) all its effects. In addition, when anything becomes imprinted, in its reality, in the mind, its 'quiddity' must necessarily remain intact however much its (accidental features related to its 'existence') may change. But 'existence' (itself) had no 'quiddity', and (if there be 'quiddity' to it) its 'quiddity', by which 'existence' would be 'existence', would simply be the very reality of 'existence' (itself), so there can be no 'existence' as something additional to the 'quiddity' in such a way that it could leave the latter as something which would continue to remain intact in the mind.

1. The universal which is the source of the 'five universals' is 'quiddity' *qua* 'quiddity' as understood in itself without any considerations of 'existence', whether external or mental. This is what is meant here by the 'thing-ness' of 'quiddity'.

2. The essential mark of something being existent in the mind is that the thing does not produce all the effects which are naturally expected of it in the external world. For example, fire in the external world is expected to produce heat as one of its natural effects; in the mind, however, the production of such an effect does not take place.

II. Existence is Fundamentally Real

Existence, in our opinion, is fundamentally real

The argument of our opponents is invalid

Know that every possible (existent) is a duality composed of 'quiddity' and 'existence'. The 'quiddity' which is also called a 'natural universal'¹ is what is given in the answer to the question: 'What is it?'

Of all the philosophers there has been none who has asserted that both ('quiddity' and 'existence') are equally real in the most fundamental way. For if they were both fundamentally real, it would follow that every single thing would be two distinguishable things; it would also follow that a real composition (instead of simplicity) should be found even in the First² Emanation; again, in addition it would follow that 'existence' would not be very realization or coming-into-being of a 'quiddity:' and other absurd consequences as well.

In fact, (the philosophers) have been divided by upholding two theories. The first asserts that the principle of the realization of anything is 'existence' while 'quiddity' is merely something posited, i.e., a mental counterpart to 'existence' that is united with the latter. This is the doctrine held by the most authoritative of the Peripatetics. And this is also the doctrine chosen here, as is indicated by the following verse: *Existence, in our opinion is fundamentally real*.

As to the second (of the two theories), it holds that what is fundamentally real is 'quiddity', while 'existence' is something (mentally) posited. And this is the position taken by the Shaykh al-Ishrāq, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī.³ This is what is referred to by our saying: *The argument of our opponents is invalid*.

For example, (our opponents argue:) if 'existence' were actualized in concrete (ly existent things), it would itself be something existent; and the latter would have also 'existence', which again, would have 'existence', and so on *ad infinitum*.

Such an argument, however, is absurd because of the fact that 'existence' does exist in virtue of its own self, not by another 'existence'. So the matter does not in any way

1. 'Universal' is divided into three kinds: (1) 'logical universal' (*kullī manṭiqī*), (2) 'natural universal' (*kullī ṭabīʿī*) and (3) 'rational universal' (*kullī ʿaqlī*). The first is the concept of universality itself. The second is an object to which the concept (the 'logical universal') applies, e.g., man, animal. The third is the combination of (1) and (2) e.g., man as universal, animal as a universal, etc.

2. In this passage, 'first Emanation' means the 'First Intellect' (*ʿaql awwal*), in which all possible things are contained potentially in the form of a metaphysical Unity. Since the Absolute has no 'quiddity', but is sheer existence, the First Emanation from It should necessarily be simple without any composition.

3. Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) is the leading representative figure in the entire history of Islamic philosophy, of the position that 'existence' is something mentally posited, and not fundamentally real. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, or Shaykh al-Ishrāq, as he is often referred to by the honorary title, is the founder of an important gnostic tradition in Iran known as illuminationism (*ishrāqī*), and his teachings have played an exceedingly important role in the spiritual life of Islam, particularly in Shi'ism.

lead to an infinite regress. The rest of their arguments are all of the same nature. The latter are mentioned together with their proper answers in more detailed works. We shall not unnecessarily lengthen our concise exposition by mentioning them.

Because 'existence' is the source of all values

Let us mention six of the arguments of the school which we support.

The first argument: *Because 'existence' is the source of all values* so much that philosophers have declared that the goodness of 'existence' is self-evident. It goes without saying that neither value nor good can be attributed to a concept that is simply posited by the mind.

The distinction between the two modes of 'being' fully suffices

The second argument: *The distinction between the two modes of 'being'* i.e., the external and the mental, *fully suffices* in establishing the thesis to be proved. This may be explained as follows: When a 'quiddity' externally exists, it produces those effects to be expected from it, while the contrary is the case with the mental existents. So if 'existence' were not realized, and if what were realized were 'quiddity'—and 'quiddity' is kept in both modes of being without any difference—there would be no distinction between the external and the mental. But since this consequent is absurd, the antecedent must also be the same.

Also we hold the necessary existence of priority in causal relationship, while there can be no order with regard to 'quiddity'

The third argument: *Also* our thesis can be proved by *the necessary existence of an essential priority in causal relationship*, i.e., a thing which happens to be the cause of something else, (necessarily has an essential priority over the latter) *while there can be no order with regard to 'quiddity'*. This can be explained as follows. The cause necessarily precedes the effect, while there can be no priority-posteriority with regard to 'quiddity'. So in case both of them belong to one species or to one genus, such as a fire being the cause of another fire, or 'matter' and 'form' being the cause of 'body', or again the First Intellectual being related to the Second Intellect as its cause. Supposing that 'existence' were something mentally posited, then specific 'quiddity' of fire, for example, *qua* fire (as the cause) would be prior, and the specific 'quiddity' of fire *qua* fire (as the caused) would be posterior; likewise, the generic 'quiddity' of a substance *qua* substance would be prior, as it happens to be in the cause, while the same thing *qua* substance would be posterior as it happens to be in the caused. This would necessitate a priority-posteriority¹ relationship in the 'essences'.²

A large number of people have combined the thesis that 'existence' is something (mentally) posited with the thesis that there can be no order with regard to 'quiddity'.

1. The word in the text is 'posteriority' which the editors have changed to 'posteriority'.

2. 'Essentials' (*dhātīyyāt*): genus, species, and differentia.

But, according to the position which holds that 'existence' is fundamentally real, the things which are prior or posterior are admittedly 'quiddities', and yet that by which they are prior or posterior is real 'existence'.

What brings to light our contention is the existence of degrees in the gradual increase of intensity (constituting) various species.

And the fourth argument: *What brings to light our contention is the existence of degrees, i.e., the infinite degrees of 'strong' and 'weak', as indicated by our words: in the gradual increase of intensity*—because the 'gradual increase of intensity' is a kind of movement, and all movement is continuous and everything continuous allows for an infinite number of limits being posited in it—*(constituting) various species* each having an actualized 'quiddity'.

This can be explained as follows. According to philosophers the different degrees of 'strong' and 'weak' in the gradual increase of intensity—as in the case of 'transformation'—constitute different species, these degrees are infinite since everything continuous is infinitely divisible. So if 'existence' were something mentally posited, which would be one or many in accordance with the things from which the concept of 'existence' would be abstracted, namely, 'quiddities', the latter being in this connection infinite and fundamentally real—if this were the case) then the species which are in actuality infinite would be bound by two limits, i.e., the beginning and the end.

On the contrary, if 'existence' does have reality, it would be like a thread bringing the scattered 'quiddities' into order and keeping them from dispersion.

If we adopt the view that it is 'existence' that is fundamentally real we would recognize that here, running through all the scattered 'quiddities', is one single reality (i.e., 'existence'). This is comparable to the unity which we observe in things having extension, whether they be immobile or mobile, for their multiplicity is mere potential, not actual.

How can it be otherwise, since by 'being' all things have left (the state of) equality?

The fifth argument: *How can it be otherwise, i.e., how can 'existence' not be fundamentally real, since by 'being'*—the word 'being' is here synonymous with 'existence'—*all things have left (the state of) equality, i.e., the equality with regard to 'existence' and 'non-existence'?* The phrase 'all things' here means the 'quiddities', because a 'thing' (*shay'*) means something whose 'existence' is wanted (*mā shay' wujūdu-hu*), namely 'quiddity'.

This point can be explained in such a way that suspicion of *petitio principii* may be removed. Both schools¹ are agreed that 'quiddity' *qua* 'quiddity' is nothing but itself, and that it has, in itself, an equal relation to both 'existence' and 'non-existence'. If 'existence' were nothing but something mentally posited, what could have made

1. I.e., Peripatetic philosophers and Illuminationists.

the 'quiddities' leave the state of equality, and by what have they come to deserve the predicate 'existent'? For adding a non-existent to another non-existent cannot possibly be a cause of 'being existent'.

As for the argument of our opponent, it is completely devoid of meaning. In fact, they assert that 'quiddity' *qua* 'quiddity', although it is within the boundary of equality, has become capable of being the subject for the predicate 'existent' because of a particular mode of being which it has acquired from the Maker after having come into relation with Him.

(We say that this argument is meaningless) because if (1) after having been related to the Maker its state (i.e., the state of being a 'quiddity') has become different, that by which it has become different can be no other than 'existence', though our opponent would certainly refuse to call it 'existence'. Besides, that relation into which 'quiddities' enter with the maker is 'illuminative', not 'categorical', because the latter kind of relation would simply be something mentally posited just as 'existence' which our opponent assumes to be mentally posited.

But if, on the contrary (2) the 'quiddity' does not become different in its state of equality and yet deserves being predicated by the predicate 'existence', that would simply be nothing other than 'mutation'; but if it does not deserve the predication it would remain in the state of equality. This, however, is a contradiction.

If 'existence' were not fundamentally real there would be no unity actualized, because all other things raise only the dust of multiplicity

The Truth and His Words would not be unified except by that with which unity always goes hand in hand

The sixth argument: *If 'existence' were not fundamentally real there would be no unity actualized, because all other things*—we mean by 'other things' 'quiddities', because their fundamental reality is the question at issue—*raise only the dust of multiplicity.*

And since it is so (i.e., since the 'quiddities' are nothing but the source of multiplicity) *the Truth and His Words and His Attributes would not be unified except by that with which unity always goes hand in hand*, i.e., the reality of 'existence'.

This can be explained as follows. If 'existence' were not fundamentally real, unity would never be obtained, because 'quiddity' is the source of multiplicity, and by nature it causes difference. The 'quiddities' by themselves are different from each other and multiple, and spread the dust of multiplicity throughout 'existence', for 'existence'

1. The 'illuminative' relation is a relation consisting of only one term (i.e., the source of illumination), so that the relation becomes actualized by the very existence of the source. For example: the relation which exists between the soul and intelligible forms, since the soul as the source of illumination creates its own objects. The 'categorical' relation, on the contrary, is a relation subsisting between two terms, so that it cannot be actualized unless there be actualized the object of the relation. For example: what is observable in the phenomenon of empirical knowledge ('ilm *ḥuṣūlī*), which is a relation between the perceiving subject and an already existent object.

becomes multiple in a certain way through the multiplication of its subjects, just as 'existence' is the very centre about which turns the sphere of unity. And if unity were not actualized, there would be no 'unification' of 'it-is-it-ness' (i.e., identity) as exemplified by propositions like 'Man is writer' and 'The writer is laughter', because we have supposed the aspect of unity which is 'existence' to be something mentally posited, and what is fundamentally real to be the very 'quiddity' of 'man' and the concepts of 'writer' and 'laughter'. But the essential characteristic of concepts is 'difference' and they bring about the only 'other-ness' and 'being far-removed from each other', not 'it-is-it-ness'. Thus by the position here discussed, the problem of 'unification', which is the very basis of all problems, has not been solved in a satisfactory way, neither the problem of the 'unification' of the (Divine) Essence, nor the 'unification' of the Attributes, nor the 'unification' of the Acts and Words.

As for the problem of the 'unification' of the Divine Essence, if we assume 'quiddity' (not 'existence') to be fundamentally real, there would be no common element between two Necessary Beings—in case we posit them—instead of each of them being composed of a common aspect and distinguishing aspect, since we have assumed that it is 'quiddity' that is real in both of them. But it is of the very nature of the 'quiddities' that they are totally different from each other. This invalidates their proof of 'unification', which is based on the idea of 'composition' being necessarily entailed.¹

As for the 'unification' of the Attributes, if 'existence' were something mentally posited, it would be impossible for reason to judge either that the concepts of Knowledge, Will, Power, and other real Attributes are one, or that they are unified with the Divine Necessary Essence, since we have assumed that the attributes and the essence lack the principle of unity, namely, 'existence'. If, on the contrary, 'existence' were fundamentally real, the Attributes would be unified in the dimension of 'existence', even though in the dimension of concepts they would be different one from the other as well as from the Divine Essence which they qualify, for the Divine Essence would, according to the position taken by the opponents, be one of the 'quiddities'.

1. This argument refers to one of the classical proofs for the oneness of God. If there were two Necessary Beings, both would share the property of being-necessary. At the same time, each one must have something which would distinguish it from the other. This would entail that each be a composition of a common element and a distinguishing element. But this consequent is absurd because God is essentially simple and not composite. This is what is known as the proof of the oneness of God by means of the concept of 'composition' (*tarkib*). Sabzawārī refers here to this particular proof in order to show that this proof itself cannot remain valid unless the position is taken that 'existence' is fundamentally real, and not 'quiddity'. For if one takes the position of 'quiddity' being fundamentally real, one will have to admit that the two Necessary beings would completely be different from each other, having absolutely no common element between them, because on this supposition each one of the two Necessary Beings would be nothing other than a 'quiddity', and because all 'quiddities' are by definition essentially different from one another. This naturally leads to the conclusion that, on the supposition of 'quiddity' being real, the famous proof by 'composition' would not remain valid.

This would necessarily entail multiplicity in the Essence in accordance with the multiplicity of the Attributes.

As for the 'unification' of the Acts and Words, according to our opponents' view, all things that come out from God, (i.e., His Acts and Words) would be nothing other than diversified 'quiddities' each of which has a proper answer to give to the question: *What is it?* And being without 'existence' they would remain in such a state that it may properly be said of them that there is no relation between the abstract and material, heaven and earth, man and horse, etc. Where, then, would be the one Face of God which is indicated by His own words: 'Wherever you turn, the Face of God is there' (54:50). Since naturally the Face of the One is one. And how will it be with the one Word 'Be!' which is indicated by his words?: 'Our command is but one' (2:115).

If, on the contrary, 'existence' which is the pivot of 'unity'—or rather 'unity' itself—is fundamentally real, all the diversified things will be unified in it and all the distinguishable things will participate in it. 'Existence' in fact is the luminous aspect in which all darknesses disappear, and it is also His Word, Will, Mercy, and the rest of His positive Attributes.

III. Existence is Analogical

This is also one of the basic philosophical problems, and it will clarify the position of the Iranian philosophers that will be mentioned later. For, since the concept of 'existence' is something shared by all things, while it is evident that one single concept cannot be abstracted from diverse entities insofar as they are diverse, 'existences' in different existents cannot be diverse entities; rather, they are degrees of one single 'reality' which allows of analogical predication.

This can be proved in several ways. The first proof is indicated by our words:

Its analogicity is proved by the capability of its being the source of division
Its analogicity, i.e., the analogical nature of 'existence', is proved by the capability of its being the source of division, that is to say, by the fact that 'existence' is divided into the 'existence' of the necessary and the 'existence' of accident, etc., and that the principle of division must necessarily be shared by all the divisions.

Likewise by the one-ness of the concept of 'non-existence'
 The second proof: *Likewise* its analogicity is proved *by the one-ness of the concept of 'non-existence'* because there is no differentiation in 'non-existence', and 'existence' is its contradictory. And the contradictory of what is one is one; otherwise two contradictions would be removed together.¹

1. If the contradictory of the 'non-existence' (which is necessarily one) were many instead of being one, two contradictories would be removed from one and the same thing. To explain:

The conviction about it will not be removed, when the conviction about 'determination' comes to be shaken.

The third proof: *the conviction about it*, i.e., the conviction about 'existence'¹ *will not be removed even when the conviction about 'determination',* like 'being a substance' or 'being an accident', comes to be shaken. The word 'determination' here is synonymous with the word 'particularization' as used by the author of *Hikmat al-'ayn*² when he says: Otherwise, the conviction about 'existence' itself would disappear when the conviction about 'particularization' happens to be discarded.

We can formulate this in the following way. When we establish the proof that the world must necessarily have an existent 'mover', we become thereby firmly convinced of the existence of the 'mover'. If, thereafter, there occurs in our minds doubt as to whether the 'mover' is a necessary being, or a substance, or an accident, that doubt does not in any way impair the above-mentioned conviction. For if we become convinced that the 'mover' is a necessary being, and then the conviction happens to be changed into another conviction that it is a possible being, the conviction that it is a necessary being will certainly disappear, and yet the conviction that it is existent will not disappear. If it were not for its analogicity, the conviction that it is existent would also disappear when the conviction that it is a necessary being disappears. But this consequent is absurd, so must be also its antecedent.

All are signs of the Glorious

The fourth proof *All existents*, whether in the 'horizons' (i.e., in the external world) or in the 'souls' (i.e., in the internal world) *are signs of the Glorious* whose Glory is to be glorified, as He said in His admirable Book: 'We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls so that it may become clear to them that it is the truth' (41:53).

Now the sign of a thing is not distinguishable from the latter in all respects; rather it is like a shadow with regard to the things. Can darkness ever be a sign of light? and shadow a sign of sunshine? So if 'existence' were not something shared

Suppose there were several different 'existences' having no commonly shared basis among them, e.g., existence A, existence B, existence C, existence D, etc. It would be possible on such supposition that two contradictories (namely, 'non-existence' and any one of the existences, e.g. A,) might be removed from one and the same thing, in the sense that the thing may be existent by one of the remaining existences, i.e., B, C, D, etc.

1. Suppose we are convinced that a table exists and that it has a certain colour and shape. Even if we lose our certainty about its colour and shape, our certainty about the 'existence' of that particular table will still remain intact.

2. 'Alī ibn 'Umar Najm al-Dīn Dabīrān al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī (d. 675/1276). He was a contemporary of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūṣī and was closely connected with the latter in his scientific activity. Both 'Allāmah Ḥillī and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī studied under his guidance. The *Hikmat al-'ayn* is one of his major works in metaphysics. Many commentaries have been written upon this book, the most famous of them being *Idāh al-maqāṣid* by 'Allāmah Ḥillī.

by all existents, they would not be signs of God the Exalted, while in reality the existents *qua* existents are all signs of Him which are recorded in both His external Book of creation (i.e., the world) and His internal Book of creation (i.e., the human soul) as is mentioned in various places of His Scripture which conforms to both the external and the internal Book in exactly the same way as ‘existence’ in a written or pronounced form conforms to ‘existence’ in its mental or external form.

Our opponents take the position of agnosticism

The fifth proof: *Our opponents* like Abu’l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī¹ and Abu’l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī² and many of our contemporaries who are not men of reasoning and who deny the analogicity of ‘existence’, *take the position of agnosticism* in order to guard themselves against the doctrine of ‘resemblance’ and ‘cognition’ between the cause and the caused, while in reality the ‘cognition’—like the ‘cognition’ of a thing and its shadow—is one of the conditions of causal relationship. They abandon the idea of knowing His Essence and Attributes. For, when we say that He is existent we understand thereby that self-evident concept which remains the same in all things which ‘existence’ can rightly be predicated—though one of them (i.e., God) is infinitely above infinity as regards to number, time, and intensity of being, while all the others are limited, and in their very being limited, are but shadows, and not real things—so that there necessarily ensues analogicity. Those people run away from this and its consequences, just as a man suffering from a bad cold tends to run away from the fragrance of musk.

If, on the contrary, we do not take the word ‘existent’ in that sense, but in the sense that to Him is to be attributed the opposite or the contradictory of that idea—the contradictory of ‘existence’ being ‘non-existence’—it would necessarily follow that the world be devoid of an existent origin. We take refuge in God from such a view!

If, further, we do not understand anything, we would be depriving our intellect of all knowledge of God.

Likewise, when we say that He is the Essence which essentializes ‘essences’ or a Thing which provides things with ‘thing-ness’; (1) either we understand hereby ‘non-essence’ or ‘non-thing’ (which is sheer nonsense)—God stands high above what is claimed by the unjust—(2) or we would deprive our intellect of all knowledge of God. The same is true of the Attributes. Because, when we say, for example: ‘He is knowing’ or ‘O (he who is) knowing!’, in accordance with the usage of His Beautiful Names, in prayers and remembrances; (1) either we mean by the word

1. al-Ash‘arī (d. c. 330/941), one of the greatest figures in the early phase of the historical development of Islamic theology and the founder of the ‘orthodox’ school in theology, known as *Ash‘ariyyah*.

2. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī (d. 436/1044), an outstanding Mu‘tazilī theologian, a disciple of ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadānī, the author of many important books among which the most famous is *al-Mu‘tamad fī uṣūl al-fiqh*.

‘knowing’ one to whom a thing is disclosed—in which case we would have analogicity and its consequences—(2) or not (i.e., either we mean by the word ‘knowing’ just the opposite of ‘knowing’, or we do not understand anything at all), in which case there would necessarily follow the other kind of false consequences. Thus their theory would deprive the intellect of all knowledges and remembrances except by way of the mere clacking of the tongue.

In brief, all that we hear from most of our contemporaries is nothing but sophistry based on confusion between concepts and the objects to which they apply.

Among those things which support our thesis (is that fact that) making it a rhyme-word constitutes repetition

The sixth proof: *Among those things which support our thesis* namely that of analogicity, there (*is the fact that*), as has been related by Fakhr al-Rāzī in his commentary on the *Ishārāt*¹ concerning the position taken by some philosophers, *making it*, i.e., the word ‘existence’ (*wujūd*) *a rhyme-word in poetry constitutes repetition*, i.e., the repetition of one and the same rhyme-word, which is considered defective by the rhetoricians.

This proves that ‘existence’ maintains one meaning, for if it were homonymous, that kind of repetition would not come about from its being used as a rhyme-word, as when the word ‘*ayn* (a homonymous term having a variety of meanings) is used as a rhyme-word. On the contrary, one should consider using the word *wujūd* as a rhyme word (on the supposition that it be a homonymous term) as something praiseworthy, because this usage provides an example of the art of *tajnīs al-qāfiyah* which is regarded as one of the laudable techniques in the art of beautiful and forceful expression.

IV. Existence is Something Additional to Quiddity

This is directed against al-Ash‘arī when he asserts that ‘existence’ is mentally identified with ‘quiddity’, in the sense that the concept of the one is the same as that of the other.²

The authoritative philosophers have asserted that ‘existence’ is something added to ‘quiddity’ mentally, but not in the external world. But even in the mind (this separation of ‘quiddity’ from ‘existence’) is not realized; it is obtainable only by

1. Muḥammad ‘Umar Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1209) is one of the most important Sunni theologians who was among the first to systematize Islamic theology on a philosophical basis. One of his major works is his famous commentary on *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbihāt* of Ibn Sīnā.

2. There is a complete agreement among all philosophers in Islam that ‘existence’ is not anything which occurs to ‘quiddity’ in the external world, but that ‘existence’ and ‘quiddity’ are one there. The divergence of opinion appears only regarding the problem whether or not ‘existence’ is one and the same as ‘quiddity’ in the mind. Al-Ash‘arī takes the position that they are one, which is denied by most of the philosophers including Sabzawāri.

rational analysis and labouring. This is so because something being in the mind is also mental 'existence' just as something being in the external world is external 'existence'. But it is of the very nature of the intellect to notice 'quiddity' in abstraction, totally discarding both modes of 'existence', by not taking them into consideration, not by simply negating them. In other words, if as a result of hard labouring of the mind we separate 'quiddity' from both kinds of 'existence', then 'quiddity' would not be 'existence' by way of primary essential predication.¹ The same is true of 'divestment' and 'abstraction'.²

Existence is something which occurs to 'quiddity' conceptually, while they are unified as a concrete being

'Existence' is something which occurs to 'quiddity' conceptually or mentally, for the 'thing-ness' of 'quiddity' (i.e., 'quiddity' insofar as it is 'quiddity') itself furnishes a sufficient ground for its occurrence; but not externally, for in that case it would require the 'existence' of the object (which is 'quiddity') prior to the 'existence' which occurs to it, *while*, objectively (i.e., in the external world) *they are unified as a concrete being*.

Existence' alone is properly to be negated

Let us give four proofs of the above-mentioned argument.

The first proof: *'Existence' alone is properly to be negated*, i.e., 'existence' can properly be negated of 'quiddity', while neither 'quiddity' can properly be negated of itself nor its essential properties. So 'existence' can be neither the same as 'quiddity' nor a part of it.

Its predication requires a middle term

The second proof: *Its predication*, i.e., the predication of 'quiddity' by 'existence'

1. The primary essential (*awwalī dhātī*) predication is that kind of predication in which the subject happens to be the same as the predicate with regard to both 'existence' and 'quiddity', e.g., 'Man is man', or as we say in the definition of man, 'Man is a rational animal'. The common technical (*shā'i'-sinā'i*) predication, on the contrary, is that in which the subject is the same as the predicate only with regard to 'existence', while with regard to 'quiddity' they are different from each other, e.g., 'Man is a writer'.

2. If we think of something concretely existent (a table, for example), and wish to separate its 'quiddity' (the table-ness, for example) from its 'existence', we simply abstract or divest the 'quiddity' of the thing from its 'existence'. At the level of primary essential predication, divestment is divestment, and abstraction is abstraction. However, at the level of common technical predication, separating 'quiddity' from 'existence' is not simple divestment or abstraction. We must first add mentally to the 'quiddity' of the thing its 'existence' before we can separate 'quiddity' from 'existence'. Thus a simple analysis of the mental process involved in 'abstracting and divesting' reveals that in order to separate the 'quiddity' of a thing from its 'existence', there first occurs in the mind the combining of the two. 'Divesting' (*takhliyah*) necessitates the 'embellishing' (*tahliyah*) of the 'quiddity' with 'existence'.

requires a middle term, that is to say, it requires what is accompanied by 'because', as it has been made clear by the shaykh, Ibn Sīnā. Thus, when we say: 'Intellect is existent', the statement needs a proof, while the predication of 'quiddity' and its essential properties does not require any proof, because the attribution of an essential property of a thing to that very thing is self-evident. Thus 'existence' is neither the same as 'quiddity' nor a part of it.

'Quiddity' could be separated from 'existence' through intellection

The third proof: '*Quiddity*' could be separated in a particular way; namely, through the above-mentioned rational analysis and labouring, *from 'existence' through intellection*.

We intellect a 'quiddity', the 'quiddity' of a triangle, for example, while disregarding its external and mental 'existence'. And what is not disregarded is other than what is disregarded. This proves that 'existence' is something additional to 'quiddity'.

All would be unified, and there would be an infinite regress

The fourth proof: All 'quiddities' would necessarily be unified if 'existence' were the same as 'quiddity', for 'existence' is one, and the predication of 'quiddities' by 'existence' as well as the predication of 'quiddities' by each other would all be no other than primary predications—for we are concerned here with the conceptual sameness and other-ness—but this consequent is evidently wrong. There are a number of Sufis who accept this consequent on the basis of the 'unity of existence'—as related in the *Shawāriq*.¹ But in the light of the above explanation we cannot accept it. For the argument put forward by the Sufis certainly holds true of the real 'existence' of 'quiddities', but with regard to the 'quiddities' *qua* 'quiddities' and 'concepts', even they would not be able to hold to 'unification'.

And there would necessarily be an infinite regress if 'existence' were a part of 'quiddity'. This may be explained as follows. According to this view, 'quiddity' would have to have another existent part—because it is impossible that an 'existence' should be constituted by a 'non-existence'—so that 'existence' in this view would necessarily be a part of a part and so on, thus entailing an infinite regress with regard to the parts of a 'quiddity', and it would become impossible to intellect any 'quiddity' in its reality. This however, is absurd, because we do intellect many of the 'quiddities' with the entire essential properties, both primary and secondary.² And to deny this is simply to argue against an evident truth.

1. *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, a major work of Mullā 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī (d. 1051/1641), a son-in-law of the great philosopher Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī, commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā. The *Shawāriq* is a detailed philosophical commentary upon Ṭūsī's famous *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*.

2. The primary essential properties (*dhātiyyāt awwaliyyah*) are like 'animal' and 'rational' with regard to 'man'. The secondary essential properties (*dhātiyyāt thānawiyyah*) are like 'body',

That this constitutes an infinite regress is quite evident, if these parts which are linked with one another in an orderly way were external. But even if they were conceptual parts, an infinite regress would be inevitable, because they would certainly be unified in concrete existence, but not on the level of substantiality of their 'essences', for they are distinguishable from each other in actuality. How could it be otherwise since this very distinction is the guarantee of their priority with regard to substantiality.¹ Such would be the view of those who take the position that 'quiddity' is fundamentally real.

But on the basis of the view that 'existence' is fundamentally real, we assert that the unification of parts in concrete existence is true concerning the 'quiddities' of the external simple things; but concerning the 'quiddities' of the external composite things, these parts are nothing other than 'matters' and 'forms', and the difference is simply a matter of viewing. And since they are infinite, they will inevitably be an infinite regress. And the inevitability of an infinite regress even in any single place is enough to show the fallacy of the theory as well as to reveal that an infinite regress is here definitely actualized.

A single unit, just like the absolute concept of it as well as its portions, Is something additional to it absolutely, whether it be general or particular

A single unit of 'existence'—just like the absolute concept of it (i.e., 'existence') as well as its portions which are the very same concept of 'existence' as related to various 'quiddities' in such a way that the relation be included therein and the object of the relation be left outside—is something additional to it, i.e., 'quiddity' absolutely; this last adverb purports to generalize the 'single unit' *whether it be general or particular*. We mean by 'general' and 'particular' here wideness and narrowness with regard to concrete 'existence' which is not opposed to 'singleness'. This is very common usage among us in accordance with the usage of the people of mystical experience, for they use the words 'universal', 'general' and 'absolute' for the real 'existence' which cannot apply to individuals, while they use the words 'particular', 'determined' and 'individual' for specific modes of the real 'existence'. By the former they mean the 'Comprehensive' and 'Wide', while by the latter they mean the 'comprehended' and 'delimited'. The same type of usage is observable among the Illuminationists of the word 'universal' for the 'lord of the species'.²

'growing' and 'sensible' with regard to 'man'.

1. 'Priority in term of substantiality' (*sābiq bi'l-tajawhur*) also called 'priority in terms of quiddity' (*sābiq bi'l-māhiyyah*), refers to the priority of the causes of subsistence over the caused (i.e., effect) at the level of 'quiddity' and 'essence', like the priority of genus and differentia over species.

2. In the gnostic view of the Illuminationists, for each of the species of the things that are existent in this world there is, in the higher angelic dimension of eternity, one single individual of a purely intellectual nature, which is entrusted with the maintaining of the whole species. This individual is called the 'Lord of a species' (*rabb al-naw*).

What we want to say by this is as follows. There are three kinds of 'existence', each one of which is distinguishable from 'quiddity'. First: the self-evident general concept of 'existence,' and second, its portions; and third, its 'single units' which are the reality of the 'unfolded existence' called the 'Holy Emanation.'¹ and which are various sorts of particular 'existence' by which 'non-existence' is expelled from the 'quiddities'.

The first two are something additional to the third just as they are to 'quiddity', and they are not essential to the third. Only the general concept is essential to the 'portions'. The Ash'ariyah, however, hold that 'quiddity' and 'existence' are one and the same thing in all these three stages; in other words, that there is neither general 'existence' nor 'portions' nor 'single units', that there are only divergent 'quiddities'.

V. The Absolute is Pure Existence

*As for Truth, His Essence is His Existence, because occurrence would
necessitate His being 'caused'*

*The prior would be unified with the posterior, and the chain of being
would not reach any limit*

The Second Teacher (al-Fārābī) says: The word 'truth' is used (1) for a statement which is confirmed by the objective fact and (2) for an existent existing in actuality; and (3) for an existent to which annihilation has no access. And the First (i.e., God) is 'truth' from that point of view of the objective reality, from that of 'existence', and from that of annihilation having no access to Him. However, when we say that He is the Truth, we mean thereby that He is the Necessary over which annihilation has

The Illuminationists call it also the 'universal' (*kullī*) of a species on the basis of the idea that (1) the relation which the 'Lord of species' bears to all its material 'individuals' is equal with regard to its maintaining them and its continuous emanation upon them, or that (2) the 'Lord of species' is the source of principle of the species—in philosophy it is customary to call a source or principle a 'universal'—or that (3) the 'Lord of species' transcends all magnitudes, dimensions and directions, just in the same way as the Intellects and Souls are called 'universals' on this very basis.

1. 'Emanation' (*fayḍ*) is one of the key concepts in the mystical philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240), one of the greatest theosophers in Islam. 'Emanation' is of two kinds: (1) the 'Most Holy Emanation' (*fayḍ aqdas*) and (2) 'Holy Emanation' (*fayḍ muqaddas*). The 'Most Holy Emanation' is the existential self-manifestation of the Absolute, which occurs at the level of the 'absolute 'Oneness' (*aḥadiyyah*), where the absolute i.e., 'existence' still remains in its metaphysical purity, without any inner articulations. As the result of this Emanation, the absolute 'descends' from the level of the absolute 'Oneness' to that of 'Unity' (*wāḥidiyyah*), which is the unity of multiplicity, or 'existence' with inner articulations. The stage of 'Unity' is also known as the stage of divine 'Names and Attributes' (*asmā' wa-ṣifāt*). It is also the stage of Divine Knowledge, i.e., Divine Consciousness. All the divergent things still remain here in the all-comprehensive Unity of Divine Consciousness without taking on phenomenal forms. It is through the 'Holy Emanation' that these things leave the state of potentiality and come out in concrete forms into the phenomenal world.

no power and by which the 'existence' of all things subject to annihilation become necessary. 'Everything, indeed, except God is subject to annihilation.'

As for the Truth, i.e., the First, i.e., God the Exalted, *His Essence*, i.e., that by which He is He, *is His Existence*; the relation of Existence to God indicates that what is meant is the very singularity of His particular Existence in which consists His 'being Existent', and not the absolute kind of 'existence' which is analogical, because the latter is something additional to all things according to all philosophers.

Thus He is the pure Light and unmixed Existence which is nothing else than the true Unity and the personal Ipseity. All this *because occurrence would necessitate His being 'caused'*. If His Existence were something accidental, occurring to His Essence in such a way that he would be a 'thing' plus 'existence' just as any 'possible' being is composed of a 'quiddity' and 'existence', the occurrence would necessitate that the 'existence' occurring accidentally to the 'quiddity' be something caused. This is so because everything accidental is 'caused'. This is why the 'essential' has been defined as something uncaused, and the accidental as something caused.

Thus the 'existence' occurring accidentally to the 'quiddity' would be one of two things: either (1) something 'caused' by that to which it occurs. But the 'cause' must be prior to its 'caused' in terms of 'existence'. So if that 'existence' which is the guarantee of priority happens to be that very 'existence', which is 'caused' *the prior*, i.e., the 'existence' of that to which it occurs, *would be unified with the posterior*, i.e., the 'existence' which occurs to it, and this would entail necessarily a thing being prior to itself. Or the 'existence' which is the guarantee of priority may be something other than that kind of 'existence' which is 'caused'. But in that case, we simply apply to it the same argument as above—the original supposition being that 'existence' be something that occurs accidentally and that it be also something 'caused' by that to which it occurs, and so on—and *the chain of being would not reach any limit*, thus entailing an infinite regress.

(2) Or its 'existence' would be something 'caused' by something other than that to which it occurs. This would entail its being 'possible', because being-caused-by-something-else contradicts being-necessary. If we have not referred to this latter point in the poem it is simply because its absurdity is evident. You may include it in the poem if you can. The absurdity is evident because that 'something else' would be either a 'possible' thing—in which case we would be in a vicious circle, the absurdity of the circle being due to the priority of a thing to itself—or another 'necessary' thing, in which case we would have an infinite regress, because exactly the same can be said of it as of the first 'necessary' thing again, since the sameness of the Existence with the Essence is one of the characteristics of the Necessary Being.

Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī

The first major philosopher of the School of Tehran, and together with his son Āqā ‘Ali Mudarris the founder of that school, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī was born, according to a short biography of him written by his son, in the town of Zunūz in Azarbaijan near Tabriz. Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī was a gifted student and early in his educational career went to Khoy, a town in the province in which he was born, to study Arabic and Persian and the literary sciences in which he soon became a master. Then he went to Karbala in Iraq where he studied the religious sciences, especially jurisprudence (*fiqh*), with Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Shaftī, and from there to Qom where he continued such studies, concentrating especially on the science of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) with Mirzā-yi Qummī. Finally, to complete his education he went to Isfahan where he studied with the major Ṣadrian philosopher of that city, Mullā ‘Ali Nūrī, and soon became the latter’s most outstanding student in the field of philosophy.

When the famous Madrasa-yi Marwī was built, a school that still stands in the bazaar region of Tehran, the Qajar king Faṭḥ ‘Ali Shāh invited Mullā ‘Ali Nūrī to come to the capital and teach in that school. Mullā ‘Ali Nūrī responded—to the king, and according to some to Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khān Marwī, the founder of the school known by his name—that he had many students in Isfahan whom he could not abandon and therefore he could not accept the invitation. However, he added that instead he would send his best student, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī, to Tehran. And so, around 1237/1821, Mullā ‘Abd Allāh migrated to Tehran and began to teach philosophy at Madrasa-yi Marwī where he remained for two decades. He died in Tehran in 1257/1841.

Different schools of philosophy had survived in Isfahan, but Mullā ‘Ali Nūrī was a follower of the School of Mullā Ṣadrā and in fact the most important reviver of *al-ḥikmah al-muta‘aliyah* in the early Qajar period. And so Mullā ‘Abd Allāh also became a Ṣadrian philosopher and some of his works are considered to be among the most important texts of the philosophical school founded by Ṣadr al-

Muta'allihīn, such books as *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah* (Divine Flashes of Light) which he wrote in Persian. But like Mullā Ṣadrā himself, Mullā 'Abd Allāh had vast knowledge of other schools of Islamic philosophy and earlier Islamic thought, and his philosophical knowledge was not limited to the works of Mullā Ṣadrā and their commentaries by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and others.

The best known and most widely studied works of Mullā 'Abd Allāh are the *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah* which deals with *al-ilāhiyyāt bi ma'na'l-khāṣṣ*, that is, philosophical theology dealing with the nature of God, His Names and Attributes; *Anwār-i jaliyyah* (Manifest Lights), which is an extensive commentary upon the famous *ḥadīth* attributed to Imam 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib known as *al-ḥadīth al-ḥaqīqah Risāla-yi 'illiyyat* (The Treatise on Causality) dealing with God's Wrath in response to the disobedience of His servants; *Muntakhab al-khāqānī* (Royal Selections) in Persian dealing in a gnostic manner with the science of Unity (*tawḥīd*); and *Ma'ārif* (Spiritual Sciences) which is a short treatise on this subject written in a Persian of high literary quality. The *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah* is one of the major Persian texts of the Ṣadrian School and inaugurates the movement to write more texts in Persian in the field of Islamic philosophy than what we find in the Safavid period. Mullā 'Abd Allāh also wrote glosses upon the *Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā and, as Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshṭiyānī discovered, also on Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* and *Asrār al-āyāt* as well as on Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'* and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī's *Shawāriq al-ilhām*.

During his twenty years of teaching in Tehran, Mullā 'Abd Allāh trained many students in the field of philosophy. Among them the most important is without doubt his own son, Āqā 'Alī Mudarris, who succeeded his father as the central figure of the School of Tehran.

In this chapter, we have selected a part of *Divine Flashes of Light* (*Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah*) that deals with the interpretation of the meaning of existence and elucidation on existence as pure good according to Avicenna, and how the quiddities of existent beings in themselves are neither good nor evil. Zunūzī continues his discourse by offering an exposition of how contradiction and evil are the result of accidents in the created order and that existential matters are attributed to evil by accident and not by essence. He concludes by showing how evils are not created essentially but accidentally and thus are secondary.

S. H. Nasr

DIVINE FLASHES OF LIGHT

*Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah*¹

Translated for this volume by Mohammad J. Esmaili from Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī, *Lama'āt-i ilāhiyyah* ed. with prolegomena and notes by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran, 1381 Sh./1962), pp. 404–413.

On the interpretation of the meaning of existence and elucidation on existence as pure good according to Ibn Sīnā, the master of scholars

Know that existence *qua* existence is absolute good and non-existence *qua* non-existence is absolute evil. The exposition [of this concept] is that 'good', as the Master of Scholars [Ibn Sīnā] states in the chapter on *al-Ilāhiyyāt* (metaphysics) of his *al-Shifā'* (The Healing),² and his *al-Ta'liqāt* (Annotations)³ and as Šadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī states in a chapter concerning general commentaries on metaphysics in his *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*,⁴ is in accordance to what scholars have considered valid and poignant, [stating] that things [desire] in accordance to their disposition, constitution, nature, and volition. Accordingly, every object possesses a portion of possible perfections, either primarily or secondarily.

Evil is affirmed by that which is contrasted to it. Something is beneficial when it pertains to good essentially (*khayr bi'l-dhāt*). Benefit and the state of being beneficial is the attribute or state through which good is obtained in its essence. In other words, benefit is that through which something is transformed in such a way that it would attain good just as loss (*ḍarar*) is that through which pleasure turns into evil. Loss and shortcoming is therefore that which essentially leads to evil.

Proof and explanation

It is apparent that the essences of things *qua* their natures, regardless of their existence, cannot be attributed to goodness since their essences without existents cannot be predicated to good. This is because essences without existence are determined essences and their manifestations and characteristics remain abstract in their potentialities and manifestations as has been discussed in the *Lama'āt* of previous

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Mehdi Aminrazavi for his assistance in this translation.

2. Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, tr. Michel Marmura (Provo, UT, 2005), pp. 339–347.

3. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ta'liqāt*, ed. with introduction and notes by S. H. Mousavian (Tehran, 1391 Sh./2012), pp. 275–277; 315; 498; 671.

4. Šadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, vol. 7, pp. pp. 58–106.

discussions. How, then, could the [essences] be the free agent, affecting the intellects and being the cause of joy and yearning for anything, the goal and purpose of beings, the beloved and lover of created things, the originator, the totality, the perfection, the base and the sublime? The concept of existence, in all its abstract meanings, has the same status level and degree with quiddities, since due to their [essences] meanings and concepts, be it called quiddity or not, no identity for it can be conceived.

It is obvious that non-existence *qua* non-existence and annihilated things *qua* annihilated things (*ma'dūm*) are nothing and as such are simply fallacious [ontologically]; they have no mode of being in themselves other than privation. It is impossible to conceive of a distinction between them [what doesn't exist and what has gone out of existence] other than their names and concepts. How, then, could they be in any sense a completeness, a perfection, or an ineffable mode of joy, a desire of the lowest and the highest of creatures; how could they be [the source of] what has been [created]? Therefore, all modes of questioning, loving, affectedness, willingness, and all aspects of completeness and perfection of the existential realities are returned and obtained from them [essences] because they are existential realities. They [essences] have simultaneity, unity, apparentness, and uniqueness with them [existential realities]. Hence, they are both the seekers and the sought, both the agent of desire and the object of desire, the agent of ineffable joy and the object of ineffable joy with regard to their differentiation of levels and degrees of ineffable joy and desire. Existence *qua* existence, then, is absolute good and contains no evil, and non-existence *qua* non-existence is absolute evil and contains no goodness, since non-existence is essentially opposite and contrary to existence. It is therefore demonstrated that being is essentially good and what is essentially opposite to good, is evil since evil in itself is not essentially anything but the opposite of good in itself.

*On the elaboration of how the quiddities of existent beings in themselves are
neither good nor evil*

From the above it becomes clear that the quiddities of things are not in themselves attributed to good or evil; neither are they beloved in themselves, nor hated in themselves, neither attracted nor repulsed in themselves. Rather with the beloved are the beloved and with the hated, the hated, with completeness is completeness and with defectiveness are defectives, with perfection is perfection and with deficiencies are deficiencies. It can be better stated [poetically]; 'Out of weakness, wherever we landed, it became home.'¹

1. Meaning, the ontological level corresponds to the spiritual reality which it represents. This is the second stanza of a poem by Muḥammad Ṭālib Āmulī (1036/1626), a Persian poet who lived in India.

What evil is observed in all [existent beings] of the world is contingent upon the combination of non-existence and defects and the mixture of deficiencies and contingencies; this kind of combination and mixture could not be appropriate for existence *qua* existence. Otherwise it follows that pure existence could not be actualized and this, as previously stated, is in contrast with concise arguments and clear reasoning. It is rather from the necessities of creation and causality as well as from limitations placed from the origin and deficiencies of quiddities.

What have become unveiled and apparent from [the foregoing discussion] is that absolute good and the good that is absolute, absolute perfection and a perfection that is absolute, are, in all aspects, restricted to the Necessary Being in Himself, may His Name be glorified. This is because [He is] pure existence and existence purely, absolute light and light which is pure; He is the supreme principle and transcends perfection.

All I have read is but forgotten,
Save the story of the Beloved, which I repeat endlessly.¹

As to the rest of the hierarchy of existents and the levels of beings [they] are not completely devoid and exempt from the combination of evils and defects, and the mixture of deficiencies and non-existence. Within different levels and degrees, the aspect of evilness and defectiveness is completely mixed and intertwined with the aspect of goodness and perfection. For this reason, they are regarded as complete beings, such as the world of existent beings and intelligibles while this is not the case in some others. This is because of their actualization of certain aspects of their potentiality, their receptivity to evil, and the deficiency that has developed in them.

Therefore, according to common sense as well as the opinions of the intellectual elites and nobles, it is specified that the use and attribution of evil to the privation of essence or privation of some perfection among the perfections is appropriate to [the ontological level of] that essence. When a thing lacks a perfection that is worthy of it, [it] is not called evil immediately. For instance, [we can mention] the privation of inanimate objects from possessing the perfection of the plant, and the privation of plants from possessing the perfection of the animal, and the privation of animals from having the perfection of the human, and the privation of humans from having the perfection of the Necessary [Being].

1. Sa'dī of Shiraz, *Ghazaliyāt-i Sa'dī*, ed. H. Yaghmā'i, Tehran 1361 Sh./1982), p. 16.

*On the exposition of how contradiction and evil are the result of an
accident-based creation*

In summary, evil is technically a privation of essence or a privation of perfection from the perfections which are appropriate to [the ontological level of that] essence and therefore, it cannot be actualized among the intellectual intelligibles (*mufāriqāt-i 'aqliyyah*) and the sacred, since as it was mentioned repeatedly. All the perfections which are worthy of it must be actualized and the aspect of potentiality and receptivity could not have been realized [since it was fully actualized]. Instead, evil appears in the world of nature and elements which contain contradiction, conflict, generation, corruption, and transmutation, where contradiction and conflict occur. [Their ontological reality] is in accordance to the limitations of their level of existence and are descending in their degree of subsistence, and therefore are created through accidents caused by their natures. Nevertheless, they originate many positive entities and produce good results. They are a source of eminence from among many emanations and existences. Whenever contradiction and conflict do not occur in the world of generation and being, the composites and compounds do not appear in existence. The result is that minerals, plants, animals, human spirits, intellectual reasoning, or that which is base and low from non-existence to existence, from their hiddenness to the unveiling of appearance would not have come to be. [If this were the case] the emanation from the Emanator would be cut off completely and little would follow in bequeathing the good and the diffusion of perfections. The saying, 'every moment He is in a state,'¹ would become meaningless, and could not be conceived. This is because the attainment of the compounds whose actualization requires proportionate admixture are based on the mutual interaction of contradictory qualities in mysterious ways. This concept, given the wisdom of an All-Wise and Omniscient [Being], may He be exalted, is not improbable.

The saying is true which asserts, 'Since Thy fire is light, what would Thy light be like?' Such wisdom is the source of much good and countless Divine beneficence.

*Remark on another interpretation of the exposition of the Master of Scholars
[Avicenna] on the non-existence of evils*

Another proof on this, offered in this *lum'ah* was also raised by the Master of Metaphysicians [Mullā Ṣadrā] in the section on metaphysics of *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*.² In summary it states that if evil is a kind of being, it is evil either in itself or other than in itself. The former is false; otherwise it could not have come into existence,

1. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, ed. T. H. Sobhani (Tehran, 1373 Sh./1994), I, v. 1576, p. 99.
2. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, vol. 7, p. 80.

for the meaning of 'an evil in itself', is that it causes corruption and annihilation of a thing. [If this were the case,] it follows that after assuming its existence its non-existence becomes necessary which is a contradiction in terms.

The latter explanation is also false because it is evil for other than itself, either leading to the annihilation of its essence or causing a privation among its perfections. It might also be the case that it does not cause the annihilation of anything pertaining to its essence or perfections. In the first and second case, it is not really evil but the privation [of what is good] or privation of any perfection among its perfections. This is evident since an entity by virtue of being an existential entity is emanated from its [source of emanation] regardless of [the reason for] its causation and its necessity or the annihilation of its essence (*in'idām-i dhāt-i shay'*) or privation of any perfection from the perfections of its essence. [These] will not be attributed to evil at all; otherwise it follows that any existential entity is evil and this is clearly false.

The third case is also false since it is clear and evident that what does not cause the annihilation of the essence of a thing or does not cause a privation of a perfection from the perfections of that thing is not attributed to evil in accordance to that thing. This meaning, according to the masters of reasoning and followers of the heart, is considered to be based on passion and insanity.

It is also assumed that with respect to its own essence it is not predicated upon evil and thus what follows is that evil is not one among the types of evil, and this is contrary to our original premise.

The natural order of this syllogism is that if evil be an existential phenomenon, it then follows that evil not be evil. The impossibility of apodosis follows the possibility of protasis. The explanation of its consequence is clear and evident from the exposition of the antecedent condition and their impossibility.

A Subtle Remark

*An exposition of how existential matters are attributed to evil by
accident and not by essence*

It becomes apparent from these explanations and elucidations to the wise that the attribution of some of the existential notions of the cause of the annihilation of an essence from among essences, of the cause of the privation of a perfection from perfections, or of evil in itself is not in accordance with reality. Rather, it is secondary, accidental, and abstract and can be regarded to be the cause of evil in itself. According to the elocutionists, it is a kind of metaphor and allegory, but it must be known that this venue and causality is also not in accordance with reality, rather, any of the existential notions in themselves and in [external] reality have a concrete impact. It is due to obstinacy which causes contradictions and contrariety resulting in conflict which leads to corruption and decline. For instance,

heat and coldness are two existential and sensible qualities whose presence in corporeal elements are a perfection among perfections. They are useful in the actualization of compound entities such as minerals, plants, and animals; and much good which results from them. Their effect in itself is one of assimilation, catharsis, condensation, and dilution. Because of this dilution and condensation, disharmony occurs in the composition of the compound entities leading to the annihilation of essence (*in‘idām-i dhāt*) or the absence of a perfection among perfections.

Therefore, these two qualities [condensation and dilution], due to the fact that they exist, are emanated from their source of emanation, are the origin of existential affections (*āthār-i wujūdiyyah*), and are the source of great benefit and universal good, which [are then] a good among many goods and a perfection among many perfections. Considering that they are responsible for the annihilation of an essence or a privation from a perfection of that essence, or that they prevent what is intended to go towards the perfection of a thing, it is predicated on evil. This concept is accidental and not essential as it has been clarified.

Also, wicked morals and base deeds, which prevent the rational soul from the attainment of exalted states and eschatological rewards, are attributed to evil. Each of those virtues in themselves is a perfection; for instance, for the faculty of anger and desire [they] are beneficial since they originate action and bodily power and are the source of much benefit and good. Also, it becomes apparent through contemplation, that pain and grieving are also regarded as perfections for faculties of perception [since they] are useful for other reasons as well and are not attributed to evil unless it be a result of their attributes, which are non-existential (*umūr-i ‘adamī*) or are eventually traced back to non-existents (*ma‘dūmāt*).

Be aware, so that it may be discovered that all existential matters that are attributed to evil in themselves and in respect to some faculties and sources, in comparison with some other affairs and other matters, are good and perfect. Their evil is merely accidental and in respect to their disposition and intention toward evils in essence, which are non-existents and imperfections, though not every non-existent and privation, but only the non-existent of the essence of a thing or a privation of the perfection among perfections which is appropriate to [the ontological level of] that thing, as it has been discussed. Be wise!

Know that the purpose of this study and discourse is to make clear the distinction between essential evil and accidental evil. The counter arguments for the above mentioned issues are no longer valid for the proof of the truth of this claim, but are only two reasons which are basically strong and two explanations which are principally firm. Additionally, as some scholars believe, they are self-evident and necessary according to common sense and judicious thinking. As some scholars have claimed [poetically]:

When Ḥiẓām says something, consider it to be true,
For her word is indeed the true word.

People who deny this saying are naturally inept and innately feeble-minded and truly they are not safe from deficiency caused by pests and diseases and are not clear from obstinacy and wrong-doing.

Praise to God to Whom we are grateful.

Divine Lights

*On the exposition of the possibilities in good and evil and the manner
of their actualization*

Know that all existent beings in the contingent world fall at first glance into five categories:

- First, that it is all good and there is no evil in it.
- Second, that the amount of good far exceeds that of evil.
- Third, that the amount of evil far exceeds that of good.
- Fourth, that there are equal amount of good and evil.
- Fifth, that it is all evil and there is no good in it.

It appears, after reflection, that the first three options cannot be the case; otherwise in the third case, what follows is a distinction without a difference; and in the fourth case, what follows is preference for what is less preferable over what is more preferable. In the fifth case, it follows that essential evil exists, since it is evident that what is completely empty of good is essential evil and it was proven in the previous chapter that there cannot be essential evil. Moreover, it was proven that essential good is existence and essential evil is non-existence. Therefore, where it is inconceivable for goodness to exist, it necessarily belongs to the category of non-existence and non-existents. Thus, postulating the existence of the fifth type necessitates the sum of contradictions.

As to the first and second case, it is deemed by Divine providence and wisdom that its existence and actualization be of two types so what must not follow is preference for what is less preferable over what is more preferable. This is so that existence would not cease and deficiencies would not occur in [the process of emanation], making the bestowing of perfections impossible and thus [causing the] inability of bequeathing good. This is so it would not become necessary [for major evil to come] from the origin of good and perfections otherwise major evil would come to avoid minor evil. Avoiding evil to prevent minor evil is itself major evil. The example for the first case is intellectual intelligibles and sacred essences, as I have explained. The second example is the created world which due to its

[natural] disposition for the contradictions and conflicts which cause evil and loss cause certain aspects of evil in its totality to be subservient [to good]. Look at the four elements which are regarded to be evil and are among the accidental evils; and see how a single person benefits from their usefulness and how he suffers loss and pain as the result of them as well. Reflect on how the proportion of their negative impact compares to their usefulness; it is like a single drop to a sea. Whenever the relation between a single human to his life-span [in terms of the balance of good to evil] is measured, what would it be like with regard to the natural order of man, animal, and plants in the context of what I said regarding the origin of good and perfection? It cannot be counted and computed; nobody knows it but God, the Initiator and Creator. Compare this with other existential affairs which are limited in their evils. Be wise so that the truth of this position become unveiled and thus you may not remain bewildered.

Know that the purpose of this discourse is not to provide [deductive] proof and reasoning, but the purpose of this discourse is induction and since complete induction does not imply certitude; one may not infer certitude. An incomplete induction has no validity in scholarly, scientific, and other fields concerned with certitude. The purpose of this exposition is a glimpse into what is given by God and [His] transcendental wisdom in order to express the novelty of creating a solid base for thinking such that while some of the [ontological] levels of created beings are origins of evils, at the same time, they are sources of unlimited good and beneficence. Otherwise, the argument that the good appropriated to this level of existence exceeds that of evil entails the fallacy of the third and fourth proofs, even though incomplete induction in the manner mentioned before is sufficient for this claim. This is so because among most creatures the ratio of evil to good is like that of a single drop to an ocean. In a minority of them, evil is equivalent to good or more than good. [Even] if the ratio of its evil to its good be like that of a single drop to an ocean, it will not have much of an effect in the overall [presence of] good in the cosmos, rather it would be like the ratio of a white spot on a dim sheet.

Moreover, I have stated that the existential affairs *qua* the existential affairs in themselves are good and are even perfections, and so do not contain evil unless it be in respect to essential evil, which is the privation of essence and the absence of the perfection of essence.

I also commented that the accidental and secondary manifestations of essences (*tajallī bi'l-dhāt*) are of an existential nature and these existential manifestations within the limit of themselves are part of the category of good and are instrumental in the outflow of the manifestations of essences. Therefore, in any constituent particle of a compound entity, three types of goodness are materialized: the first is the goodness that stems from existential manifestations (*āthār-i wujūdiyyah*) in themselves; the second, manifested goodness (*āthār-i khayriyyāt*) in themselves; and the third, what is manifested relative to the causes. Since it is evident that

essential manifestations of a corporeal entity are appropriate to its [ontological level], therefore what is appropriate to the corporeal entity is beloved and desirable for the thing. Whenever any existential manifestation of creatures [which are good], would lead to any evil among evils, then an evil among evils becomes an instrument for a good among many goods to come about. Necessarily and evidently this is not the case. Many acts that are produced from elements and souls which do not cause corruption and evil are *apriori* and *aposteriori* proofs and rest on the notion that the order of the world and the order of every level of being is the best of all [possible] orders and the most complete. This concept can only be conceived of if its good exceeds its evil, while its evil has no manifestation along the good as necessitated by the same proof.

Be reflective and appreciate the opportunity for the endeavour [to study] the subtle and luminous discourse which was specifically designed to offer elucidation and proof on the subject matter. Praise be to God to Whom we are grateful.

Concluding Remarks on Divinity

*Remarks on how evils are not created essentially but accidentally
and thus are secondary*

From the foregoing expositions and [Divine] inspirations, it becomes unveiled to the people of insight that evils are neither created in essence, necessitated [to exist] in essence, intended [to exist] in essence, nor desired in essence. Rather, they are created as accidents and necessitated [to exist] accidentally, intended [to exist] secondarily and desired as derivatives. This means they have no ontological reality unless it be as accidents and are not desired unless as secondary and as derivative.

The elaboration on this discovery as it has been proven is that since existential truths are existential truths, they are good in essence and have no evil unless they become actualized and come into [existence and then] flow as evils [appearing] in essence. It also became clear that this manner of realization and this flowing [of evil] is not in principle and essential, but rather due to their essential goodness, which they have in themselves, as they were created in essence and necessitated and desired in essence. With respect to accidental evils that, due to their actualization and coming into [existence], have a tendency towards evil in essence, they are created accidentally and are intended as derivatives.

In summary, the attribution of existents to evil is, in truth, like describing what is added in abstraction to evil in essence. This is not truly evil. Therefore, it becomes true that created evils are created in principle and [are evil] due to the necessity of their nature and that true evils are non-existent and non-existence is not created in essence. Therefore, evils are not created unless it be secondarily and accidentally.

Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris Ṭīhrānī (Zunūzī)

Āqā ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh Mudarris, often called Ṭīhrānī and sometimes Zunūzī, was the son of the previously-mentioned philosopher Mullā ‘Abd Allāh Zunūzī. Born in Isfahan in 1234/1818, while his father was still teaching in that city, Āqā ‘Alī was brought to Tehran at the age of three by his father when the latter migrated to the capital. Later, when Āqā ‘Alī became the major philosophical figure of the School of Tehran and opened new vistas in Islamic philosophy, he was given the honorific title Ḥakīm-i Mu’assis (the Founding Sage) in the same way that Ibn Sinā was given the title Shaykh al-Ra’īs (the Chief Master). Āqā ‘Alī was brought up in a family that was highly scholarly. Not only was his father a major philosopher, but his brother, Mullā Ḥusayn Zunūzī, was a famous authority in mathematics and astronomy and Āqā ‘Alī’s wife, Sayyidah Bagum, was also a learned person. Later on their son, sons-in-law and some of Āqā ‘Alī’s grandchildren also became well-known scholarly and political figures.

Āqā ‘Alī began his early studies in Tehran with local teachers and when he became more advanced, he joined the circle of his father and studied both the transmitted and the intellectual sciences with him. Āqā ‘Alī studied such texts of Islamic philosophy as the *Sharḥ al-ishārāt* (Commentary upon the Directive and Remarks) of Ibn Sinā and Ṭūsī and *al-Mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād* (The Beginning and the End) of Mullā Ṣadrā, with his father, until the latter’s death. Then Āqā ‘Alī set out for Najaf in Iraq to complete his education in the transmitted sciences. After a fairly short stay there, he went to Isfahan to continue his studies in the intellectual sciences. It has been said that once there, he studied the *Asfār al-arba’ah* (The Four Journeys) and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Keys to the Invisible World) of Mullā Ṣadrā and the *Shifā’* (The Healing) of Ibn Sinā with Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī. Āqā ‘Alī also studied with such other famous teachers of Isfahan as Sayyid Raḍī Lārijānī and Mullā Muḥammad Ja’far Lāhijī Langarūdī. Then he set out for Qazwin to study Mullā Ṣadrā with Mullā Āqā Qazwinī whom he preferred to others when it came to the question of Ṣadrian philosophy. Still unsatisfied with his mastery of philosophy, Āqā

‘Alī returned to Isfahan and undertook again the study of the intellectual sciences with Mīrzā Ḥasan Nūrī. This second period of study in Isfahan lasted several years after which Āqā ‘Alī, having now completed his philosophical education, returned to Tehran where he still continued his study of the most advanced stages of *uṣūl* and *fiqh* with Mīrzā Ḥasan Āshtiyānī.

Āqā ‘Alī taught philosophy in Tehran for some forty years, seven years in Qāsim Khān *madrasah*, many years in his own house, and for some twenty years as official *mudarris* or professor at the famous (old) Sipahsālār *madrasah*. He also taught *fiqh* but most of his teaching was devoted to philosophy. He became known as the premier master in the teaching of Islamic philosophy in Tehran where he also occasionally taught mathematics in addition to *fiqh* and *falsafah*. In the field of philosophy Āqā ‘Alī taught mostly the works of Mullā Ṣadrā especially the *Asfār, al-Mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād, al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* (Divine Witnesses) and *Sharḥ al-hidāyat al-athīriyyah* (Commentary upon the *Book of Guidance* [of Athīr al-Dīn Abharī]). But he also taught Ibn Sīnā’s *Shifā’* and *Sharḥ ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (Commentary [by Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī] upon the *Theosophy of the Orient of Light* [of Suhrawardī]) upon which Āqā ‘Alī wrote glosses.

During this long period of teaching, numerous students flocked to his courses, some of whom studied also with Āqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha’ī and Mīrzā Abu’l-Ḥasan Jilwah, two other celebrated teachers of the School of Tehran. Among Āqā ‘Alī’s most famous students one can mention: Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Iṣṭahbānātī, who became himself a famous teacher and who was killed in Shiraz during the Constitutional Revolution; Ḥaydar Qulī Khān Qājār Nahāwandī, who succeeded Āqā ‘Alī as professor of philosophy at the Sipahsālār *madrasah*; Mīrzā Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī, who also became a teacher at Sipahsālār *madrasah*; Mīrzā Ḥāshim Ashkiwarī, who became one of the foremost authorities of his day in gnosis (*‘irfān*); Nā’ib al-Ṣadr Shīrāzī who became a famous Sufi master with the title Ma’šūm ‘Alī Shāh; and Mīrzā Ṭāhir Tunakābunī, who lived into the Pahlavi period and was considered one of the major Islamic philosophers of that period with a penchant for Peripatetic rather than Ṣadrian philosophy. These are to name just a few among the numerous notable students of Āqā ‘Alī. It is not possible to exaggerate his influence upon the philosophical scene of later Qajar and even Pahlavi Persia, an influence that was felt through both his students and his own writings. Āqā ‘Alī Mudarris died in Tehran in 1307/1889 and was buried near the mausoleum of Ḥaḍrat ‘Abd al-‘Azīm in Rayy south of Tehran.

The research of Mohsen Kadivar, who has studied the thought of Āqā ‘Alī and has edited his works critically for the first time in four large volumes, reveals that there are some twenty-eight works of this master whose attribution to him are certain. Although Āqā ‘Alī lived only a century and a half ago, some of his works seem to have been lost and there are also some works attributed to him whose authenticity is doubtful. Some of his most important works, a number of which were written in

Arabic and others in Persian, include his major opus, *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (Marvels of Wisdom); glosses (*Ta'liqāt*) upon the *Asfār*, considered by many to be the most important ever written on this seminal text, and also commentaries upon several other works of Mullā Ṣadrā including the latter's commentaries upon Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* and Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā'*; and the *Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* as well as glosses upon other major texts of Islamic philosophy by Khafri, Lahijī, Qūshjī and others. Āqā 'Alī's writings also include a number of independent treatises on such philosophical and gnostic themes as *wujūd* and *māhiyyah* (existence and quiddity), *tawḥīd* (unity), *ma'ād* (resurrection), *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of being) according to the Sufis, his own autobiography and some poetry in both Persian and Arabic. Among these independent treatises *al-Risālah fi'l-tawḥīd* (Treatise on Unity), *Risālat sabīl al-rishād fi ithbāt al-ma'ād* (The Treatise on the Path of Guidance on the Proof of Resurrection), *al-Risālah fi mabāḥith al-ḥaml* (Treatise on Discussions of Attribution), and *al-Risālah fi'l-wujūd al-rābiṭ* (Treatise on Connective Existence) are his foremost masterpieces.

Without doubt *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* is the most significant and creative work of Āqā 'Alī Mudarris and it is considered by many to be, after the *Asfār*, the most important work in the school of *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah*. If its chapters had been organized in such a manner as to be more suitable for being taught as a text, *Badāyi'* would have become one of the most popular texts for the teaching of Islamic philosophy, like the *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah* (Commentary upon the *Poem*) by his contemporary Ḥajjī Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī. The fact that *Badāyi'* is not completely suitable for use as a systematic text for the teaching of philosophy does not, however, detract from its great philosophical significance. This work is also one of the foremost works of Islamic philosophy in Persian and holds a most honourable place in this category along with the *Dānish-nāma-yi 'Alā'ī* of Ibn Sīnā, the Persian treatises of Suhrawardī and Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī and *Durrat al-tāj* of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī. Mohsen Kadivar, calls it the most important work in *al-ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah* in the Persian language. This book has also been called the first work by an Islamic philosopher on comparative philosophy.

Āqā 'Alī was a man of great humility and refined character and usually kept away from social gatherings and, to a large extent, the court. Yet, he knew many of the scholars of his day and as his fame grew scholars as well as political and social figures would come to visit him. Among them three stand out for the role they played in the dissemination of his thought and fame. The first was Mīrzā Ḥasan Khān I'timād al-Salṭanah, who was the most intimate friend of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh and the main contact between Āqā 'Alī and the king who respected him greatly. I'timād al-Salṭanah had studied in France and was acquainted with the West. He was also a disciple of Āqā 'Alī and in two of his works, *al-Ma'āthir wa'l-āthār* (Traditions and Memorable Events) on the history of Persia and especially the cultural history of the period of the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, and *Khāṭirāt*

(Memoirs), I'timād al-Salṭanah devoted many pages to Āqā 'Alī as the greatest master of his day in the Islamic sciences.

The second figure was the Qajar prince Badī' al-Mulk Mīrẓā later entitled I'timād al-Dawlah Thānī. While holding high political posts such as the governorship of several provinces, he was an accomplished philosopher and the author of several philosophic works. He also knew French and had some knowledge of European philosophy. It was the questions this prince posed to Āqā 'Alī that resulted in the composition of *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* and his name probably determined the title of this work. His questions were drawn mostly from Kantian philosophy, but the seventh question reveals that Badī' al-Mulk Mīrẓā, whose Persian translation of Mullā Ṣadrā's *Mashā'ir* Corbin included in his edition of this text, was also acquainted with the thought of Western philosophers other than Kant such as Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Bossuet, Fichte and Hegel. Corbin called Badī' al-Mulk the honour of the Iranian aristocratic class of the last century.

The third figure, who is of special interest as far as the relation of the Islamic philosophic tradition to the West is concerned, was the French philosopher and diplomat Comte Arthur de Gobineau who served as minister plenipotentiary and ambassador in the French embassy in Tehran in the late nineteenth century. Although best known for his work on the inequality of human races and a racial philosophy that became known as Gobineauism, Comte de Gobineau was also interested in Islamic philosophy, and while in Tehran made the acquaintance of Āqā 'Alī and asked him to write a treatise on the history of philosophy in Persia during the preceding seven centuries. Āqā 'Alī accepted the invitation and wrote a short treatise on the subject which Comte de Gobineau took back with him to France. This unique manuscript is held to this day in the library of the University of Strasbourg and its first part has been finally edited by Kadivar in the collected works of Āqā 'Alī. Also in his famous book *Les Religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, in the fourth chapter of the work, Comte de Gobineau speaks of Āqā 'Alī and introduces him for the first time to the Western audience. It is said by some trustworthy authorities that he also invited Āqā 'Alī to come to Paris to teach Islamic philosophy and that Āqā 'Alī was inclined to accept; but his many students prevailed upon him to change his mind and to remain in Tehran and so he declined the invitation. How different the history of the study of Islamic philosophy in the West would have been had Āqā 'Alī accepted Comte de Gobineau's invitation and gone to Paris!

So far as Āqā 'Alī's philosophical ideas are concerned, several important subjects need to be mentioned. First of all, he was among the foremost commentators of Mullā Ṣadrā and many later authorities, such as Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, have written that no one after Mullā Ṣadrā was as competent as Āqā 'Alī in unravelling the meaning of the master's words and revealing the inner sense of his teachings. Secondly, although one of the most important commentators of Mullā Ṣadrā, Āqā

'Alī expressed many new views different from those of Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn in such subjects as bodily resurrection, conditions pertaining to quiddity, attribution, connective existence, knowledge, secondary intelligibles, transubstantial motion, the unity, principiality and gradation of *wujūd*, the unity of the arcs of descent and ascent and many other important philosophical issues. An eagerly awaited volume on his philosophy written by Kadivar should make clear the great philosophical significance of this seminal figure during the Qajar period in the field of Islamic philosophy.

In this chapter, we have included a section of Āqā 'Alī's *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* which begins with a discussion concerning the principiality of existence or quiddity and continues with the treatment of such topics as the problem of predication with respect to existence or quiddity.

Having mentioned the views of other philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā and Ṭūṣī, Āqā 'Alī treats the subject of origin, resurrection and the centrality of existence and essence in the Ṣadrian philosophical tradition. This section also contains a brief discussion on the ideas of Western philosophers, in particular Immanuel Kant, which is important from a historical point of view.

S. H. Nasr

MARVELS OF WISDOM

Badāyi' al-ḥikam

Translated for this volume by Nicholas Boyleston and Mohsen Kadivar from Āqā 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh Mudarris Zunūzī (Ṭīhrānī), *Badāyi' al-ḥikam* (Tehran, 1896), pp. 111–120; 276–278.

1. The Principiality of Being

Debate and judgment [111]

The disagreement regarding the principiality of being and the principiality of quiddity is over two issues:

First: Is the concept 'being' actualized in reality, without the activity of the intellect and the conjunction of that concept to one of the individual quiddities, such that it is outside the category (*sinkh*)¹ of concepts and quiddities? Or is it that the individual [related to the concept 'being'] is limited to a 'portion' (*ḥiṣṣah*), i.e. that which results from the intellect conjoining that concept to one of the quiddities?²

The Peripatetics and adherents of transcendent theosophy among philosophers and those theologians who give matters their due (*muḥaqqiqīn-i mutakallimīn*) believe that the concept 'being' has a real individual and is not limited to a 'portion' that results from conjoining the concept 'being' to one of the quiddities.

As for the position that 'being' has no individual save the aforementioned 'portion', the majority of theologians are of the opinion that this is the case for all existents, and the Master of the Illuminationists³ and his followers, as well as certain other distinguished thinkers, believe this is the case for whatever possesses a quiddity.

Second: After it has been established that 'being' has a real individual, [the question is] whether: a) the principle of individuation and 'being-existent' (*mawjūdiyyah*) is that real individual of being, and quiddity is subordinate (*tābi*) to it in individuation and 'being-existent', or b) whether quiddity is the principle of individuation and the individual of being is subordinate to it.

The Peripatetics and the adherents of transcendent theosophy among the

1. The term *sinkh*, literally 'root', refers to the three categories of the classification 'being', 'non-existence', 'quiddity/concept'. It therefore always occurs qualified by one of these three terms or their synonyms, denoting one of them specifically in distinction from the other two. The translation 'category' should not be confused with the Aristotelian categories (*maqūlāt*), which however are not referred to in this text.

2. According to this view, the individuals relating to the concept 'being' would be compound concepts such as 'the being of the human' (*wujūd al-insān*) or 'the being of the tree' (*wujūd al-shajarah*).

3. i.e. Shahāb ad-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Ḥabash Suhrawardī, d.1191.

philosophers hold that being is the principle, and those theologians who give matters their due hold that quiddity is principal.

Thus, the meaning of the 'principality' of being in the first disagreement is that the concept 'being' has¹ a principle, a reality, a real individual that is not from the category of concepts, and its individual is not limited to a 'portion' resulting from the conjunction of the concept 'being' to a quiddity such that that 'portion' belongs to the category of concepts.

And the meaning of 'principality' in the second disagreement is that the real individual of being is the instance (*miṣdāq*) and referent of the concept 'being' by-essence (*bi'l-dhāt*), without the annexation of a restrictive modality (*ḥaythiyyah taqyīdiyyah*);² and if that individual is associated with a quiddity, that quiddity is the instance and referent of the concept 'being' accidentally and subordinately.

Since [with regard to] the subject of every issue, if it is conceptualized in such a manner as is appropriate for it to be the subject of that issue—and likewise each qualified entity, if it be conceived (*ma'qūl shawād*) in that aspect by which it is qualified by the attribute that is established (*thābit*) for it, and so forth with regards to the predicate and the attribute of predication—the predication of the title (*'unwān*) of the predicate in that issue for the subject, and the establishment of that attribute for that qualified entity, will reach the level of necessity and the degree of being self-evident.

This is because, as far as speculative (*naẓarī*)³ matters are concerned, there is no need for demonstration except for establishing the modality and aspect by virtue of which the subject is the subject for that predicate.

It is better that we conceptualize the form of the dispute (*ṣūrat-i nizā'*) in such a way that, through the expression of the form of the dispute, the truth of that which is true on both sides of the dispute in both disputes should reach the level of necessity or near to the level of necessity.

Thus we say in a general way such as to include both disputes: Is that which by-essence (*bi'l-dhāt*) repels non-existence—and that which by its essence and on the level of its essence is inconsistent with nothingness and nullity, and that which is an instance [of the concept 'being'], according to intellectual and philosophical reality (*ḥaqīqat*), without the taint of intellectual or philosophical metaphor (*majāz*), that is to say essentially and not accidentally, and without any intermediary in accident (*'urūd*) or any annexation of a restrictive modality—a) from the category of concepts and of the nature of conceptual entification (*shay'iyyat-i mafhūmiyyah*)? Or

1. Reading '*buwad*' for '*nabuwad*', as is clearly dictated by the context.

2. The 'annexation of a restrictive modality' refers to the addition to the subject term of a conceptual phrase of the form 'insofar as it is *x*' (*min ḥaythu huwa x*) that may or may not be necessary for correct predication. For example, 'Being is the subject of the natural sciences' is only true without ellipsis when one adds 'insofar as it is corporeal' to 'being'.

3. As opposed to 'self-evident' (*badihī*).

b) is it outside the category of concepts, and its entification other than conceptual entification?

Since, by necessity and immediate experience (*wijdān*), each entity that belongs to the category of concepts neither repels non-existence in itself, nor is the contrary of non-existence by-essence, nor is the antithesis of nullity, just as in itself it is also not the antithesis of being and existence, for this reason it is accepted by both parties in the disagreement—nay, it is self-evident to sound intellect and upright disposition—that: *The quiddity insofar as it is itself is not save itself* (*al-māhiyyah laysat min ḥaythu hiya illā hiya*).

That is to say, the category of quiddity and concept has nothing pertaining (*ḥāsil*) on the level of its essence save the ‘finding’ (*wijdān*)—which is a quiddity and concept related ‘finding’—of that essence itself and the essentials [i.e. the genus and differential], which belong to the category of concepts.

Therefore, every quiddity and concept is empty of being (*ḥastī*) and non-existence (*nīstī*) on the level of its essence; the intellect judges by necessity that no quiddity, by-essence and on the level of its essence, is the contrary of non-existence or the antithesis (*muqābil*) and repeller of nullity and nothingness.

Consequently, if a quiddity in the external world or in the mind repels non-existence and is the antithesis and the contrary of nothingness and nullity, this characteristic of being the repeller, the antithesis and the contrary does not belong to it essentially, and since it does not belong essentially it must be accidental and subordinate. Since by necessity for every ‘that which is accidental’ (*mā bi’l-‘araḍ*) there is a ‘that which is essential’ (*mā bi’l-dhāt*)—for otherwise it follows that there would be no ‘that which is accidental’—therefore, beyond the category of quiddity and concept there is a category that is essentially qualified by the characteristics of being the contrary, antithesis and repeller [of non-existence]. That category, by necessary judgment, is not non-existence or nothingness, since nothing is essentially the contrary, antithesis and repeller of its own essence. Therefore, that category is the category of being, and is limited to the category of being.

This is because the intellect—by necessity and immediate experience (*wijdān*) without giving form to demonstration, but rather through complete induction in its own intelligibles and conceptualizations—judges that its intelligibles are limited to being (*ḥastī*) and non-existence (*nīstī*), the former essentially repelling non-existence and the latter being essentially contrary to being. [And the intellect likewise judges that] something that is empty of both of these on the level of its own essence, (although)¹ in reality by virtue of the actualization of the sufficient cause or the lack of its actualization is necessarily qualified by one of these two (i.e. being or non-existence).

1. For the sentence to be complete it seems that the word ‘although’ *agarchi* should be overlooked.

Thus it has been revealed that the intellect, with a little contemplation, affirms that being is existent by its essence; and absolute non-existence—insofar as it is absolute non-existence—is not receptive of being; and as for quiddity, since it is empty of non-existence and being on the level of its essence, there is no inconsistency (*ibā*) for it to be qualified by being or non-existence in reality, and the applicability (*ṣidq*) of 'existent' and likewise 'non-existent' for it is accidental.

[Conclusion]

Therefore, after conceptualization of the subject of the disagreement as is appropriate and according to what is appropriate, the intellect judges with a judgment that is necessary or almost necessary that being is the principle in 'being-existent' (*mawjūdiyyah*), and whatever is other than being—be it non-existence or quiddity—if it be existent, it is a subsidiary (*far'*) of being in 'being-existent' (*mawjūdiyyah*).

A Subsidiary Study and a Result-Giving Subsidiary

From this firm-founded explanation it has become manifest that every positive concept, insofar as it is positive (*mafḥūm-i thubūtī bi-mā huwa thubūtī*), that is outside the level of the essence of the quiddity and in reality is established for it—that is to say, is applicable (*ṣādiq*) for it by secondary accidental predication, and the applicability and accident (*uruḍ*) of it is in need of an intermediary in accident—the establishment of that concept for that quiddity is a demonstration that the concept 'being' has an individual in reality, without the consideration (*i'tibār*) and activity of the intellect, such that that individual is the instance of that positive concept (*mafḥūm-i thubūtī*) essentially, on the level of its essence and with its whole essence; and that quiddity is accidentally the instance of that concept.

This is because, since every 'that which is accidental' by necessary judgment ends with a 'that which is essential', that intermediary is either by-essence the instance of that positive concept or [also requires an intermediary and] ends with another intermediary that is by-essence the instance of that [positive concept].

Since the category of non-existence insofar as it is non-existence does not have the suitability (*ṣalāhiyyat*) to be an instance-by-essence for positive concepts—for otherwise the modality of non-existence insofar as it is non-existence would be transformed into the modality of being positive (*thubūt*), or else the positive concept would be transformed into a non-existential (*'adamī*) concept; and likewise, since no quiddity has the suitability by-essence and with the whole of its essence to be the instance of another quiddity—that intermediary is inescapably from the category of being.

It has become manifest that by taking account of each positive concept—that insofar as it is positive is applicable (*ṣādiq*) for a particular quiddity by an accidental applicability—by this very explanation we know the principiality of being. This is in the sense that the concept ‘being’ has an individual in reality without the consideration (*i’tibār*) of the intellect, such that that individual is the instance and referent of that positive concept by its own essence without the consideration of any restrictive modality or any intermediary in accident; and of that group is the concept ‘existent’, the applicability of which for anything that is from the category of concept and quiddity is accidental.

Therefore, certainly (*al-battah*) and by necessary judgment there is an entity in reality that by-essence and on the level of its essence and [by] its whole essence is the instance of the concept ‘existent’. This is because if it were by-essence the instance of ‘existent’ in one part of its essence and not the other the part, the part that is not the instance would be from the category of quiddity or non-existence.

Thus, the fact that the applicability of the concept ‘existent’ with respect to quiddities is an accidental applicability is the basis for a demonstration (*burhān*) of the principiality of being—in the sense that the concept ‘being’ has an instance that is existent by-essence, and quiddity is existent by-accident.

And likewise, the applicability of the concept ‘maker’ (*jā’il*) for certain quiddities is a demonstration that being is principal in ‘being-a-maker’ (*jā’iliyyat*); and similarly the applicability of ‘made’ (*maj’ūl*) for them [i.e. certain quiddities] is a demonstration that being is principal in ‘being-made’ (*maj’ūliyyat*).

Therefore, the applicability of the concept ‘maker’ for a quiddity is accidental and for being is essential. However, for possible beings the applicability of ‘maker’ is not by-virtue-of-the-essence (*li’l-dhāt*), and hence all of the levels of ‘being-a-maker’ among possibles return to the ‘being-a-maker’ of the Necessary Being, exalted be His Majesty, and are in fact levels of His ‘being-a-maker’. Consider this carefully, for its understanding is not [possible] without precision.

And likewise, the applicability for the quiddities of each of the attributes that are known as the ‘accidents of existential realities’ (*awāriḍ-i ḥaqā’iyi-i wujūdiyyah*), such as knowledge, power and life, which pervade all existents and are not inconsistent with the necessity of being—in the way that temporal origination (in the sense of being preceded by another), existential possibility, being caused, being the formal cause, and unity through conjunction are all inconsistent with the necessity of being—is a demonstration that ‘being’ has an individual in reality that is the instance of those attributes by-essence; whereas quiddity [is an instance] subordinately [and accidentally]. And whatever is by-essence the instance of a title (*unwān*), the origin of that title is by virtue of reality (*bi ḥasab-i ḥaqīqat*) identical to its essence and is on the level of its essence.

Likewise, since the concept ‘black’ (meaning ‘possessing blackness’) and that essence that possesses blackness are applicable for a body accidentally—and it is

by consideration of the dependence of that blackness upon it that [the body] is an instance of that concept, and it is on the last level of the being of the body as such that the blackness by-essence and on the level of its own essence possesses blackness—blackness is established for [the body] by virtue of that level.

And likewise 'being a particular'—in the sense of inconsistency with and prohibition of applicability for multiple entities, given that it is external to the essence of [any] quiddity and is applicable accidentally—is the basis of a demonstration of the principiality of being. This is because the concept 'being', like all other concepts, has no inconsistency (*ibā*) with applicability to many.

Thus it has become manifest that with respect to the applicability of positive concepts for quiddities accidentally, by an accidental applicability and on a level external to the level of the essence of that quiddity, the source of conceptual-abstraction (*mansha'-i intizā*) of that concept is an entity external to the essences of those quiddities. Thus the source of conceptual-abstraction is not from the category of quiddity, since no quiddity is by-essence the source of conceptual-abstraction for a concept that is applicable to it accidentally by accidental applicability. Nor is [that source of conceptual-abstraction] from the category of non-existence, since the category of non-existence has no reality save pure nullity.

This is why the divine philosophers (*ḥukamā-yi ilāhiyyīn*), sanctified by their secrets, have also stated that positive concepts as such are never abstracted from non-existential modalities (*ḥaythiyyāt-i 'adamiyyah*) and non-existential and negative concepts as such are never derived from existential aspects (*jihāt-i wujūdiyyah*), for otherwise either non-existential modalities would be transformed into existential modalities, or positive concepts would return to negative concepts, or existential aspects would revert to non-existential aspects, or negative and non-existential concepts would go back to positive concepts—and each of these alternatives is contrary to the presupposition.

Rather, for every positive concept that is established for a particular quiddity and is predicated of it accidentally by accidental predication, and the establishment and predication of which is in need of an intermediary in establishment, its establishment for and predication of that quiddity is a demonstration that being has an individual in reality, without the consideration of any considerer nor the conjunction in the intellect of the concept 'being' with any particular quiddity. This is because it was revealed that the category of non-existence as such and the category of quiddity cannot be qualified as being intermediaries in establishment in a way that does not imply contradiction. Therefore that intermediary must be from the category of being; that is to say, it is an entity that by-essence is the contrary and repeller of non-existence.

This is just like the inseparable attributes (*lawāzim*) of quiddities that are established for the quiddities from which they are inseparable; those inseparable attributes are on the last level of the quiddity-related levels (*martabah-yi māhuwī*)

of those quiddities. The majority suppose that those quiddities by-essence necessitate (*mustatbi*) those inseparable attributes; however this is not the case, because on the level of the essence of the quiddity only the essentials are found, and the concept of ‘necessitating (*istitbā*) that necessary attribute’ cannot be abstracted from the very essence of that quiddity itself. And the reality of that quiddity, which is the concept ‘four’ for example, is not itself the concept ‘necessitating being even’ (*istitbā-i zawjiyyat*), for this meaning is contrary to the supposition and is an impossible transformation.

Therefore, the quiddity—in order for its necessary attribute to follow from it—is in need of an intermediary in establishment; and that intermediary is necessarily not from the category of non-existence or quiddity, for the category of non-existence is pure nullity and the situation of all quiddities is the same as that which has been described. Therefore, that intermediary is from the category of being.

And since we apply the intermediacy of being in the necessitation (*istitbā*) of the necessary attributes of quiddities, being is an intermediary in accident and is the necessitator (*mustatbi*) by-essence, whereas the quiddity is by-accident a necessitator. Rather, [it is even the case that] the quiddity’s ‘finding’ (*wijdān*) its own essentials in its quiddity-related individuation (*tafarrud-i māhuwī*) is also by the intermediacy of being, as an intermediary in establishment; this is because the individuation of the quiddity through quiddity-related individuation is also consequent to the individuation of being, even though it is in the receptacle (*zarf*)¹ of the consideration (*i’tibār*), analysis, separation and divesting of the intellect that one separates quiddity from being and considers it divested of being. This is because the divestment [of a quiddity] from being in the receptacle of consideration is precisely the admixture with being; for the consideration of the intellect is a form of apprehension, and apprehension is one of the accidents (*awarid*) of being, and the attributes of being—as has been mentioned in response to the first question, just as it shall be mentioned again with a little alteration in this response—according to reality are identical to being.

And likewise, in compound quiddities, the synoptic form (*ṣūrat-i ijmāliyyah*) defined in the intellect and the unified form (*ṣūrat-i waḥdāniyyah*) of the parts in the external world are the basis for a demonstration of the principiality of being. This is in the sense that ‘being’ has a real individual because the category of quiddities and concepts, considering their essences in isolation, are separate, diverse and different from one another; thus no concept is capable of being combined with any other.

Therefore, if a concept is considered in the intellect in a synoptic way, and the intellect uses the analytic faculty that it possesses to analyze it into the concepts that are enclosed within it—like the concept to be defined (*maḥdūd*), which the

1. The word *zarf*, literally ‘container’ or ‘receptacle’, is related to the distinction between ‘mental existence’ (*wujūd-i dhihnī*) and ‘external existence’ (*wujūd-i khārijī*) such that the two possible ‘receptacles’ are therefore either the mind or the external world.

intellect after detailed consideration of the parts of the definition (*ḥadd*) returns to and considers in a synoptic way, such that it is able to analyze it into the parts of the definition; or when [a quiddity] exists in the external world in a unified form, for example the external simples such as blackness, or rather the external compounds also, such as ruby, which comprise a shared genus and a distinct differentia—there is a demonstration that ‘being’ has an individual according to reality.

This is because, if it did not have a real individual that comprised the parts of the definition—in a synoptic way in the mind such as contained the quiddity-related parts, or in a unified form in the external world—neither would the concept defined have a synoptic form in the mind, nor would the compound have a unified form in the external world.

But furthermore, the moderation of the intensity of the forms of the elements (*inkisār-i ṣūrat-i ṣuwar-i 'anāṣir*) and their admixture and acceptance of a unified compound form such that a real compound should result, and the transformation of the various qualities of the compounds to a single quality comprising the constitution [of the compound created] would be inconceivable without a real individual of ‘being’. This is because quiddities in themselves do not have an aspect of unity and an aspect of combination.

And to sum up, when you look upon things with philosophical precision and give them their due as wisdom dictates, the ‘being existent’ (*mawjūdiyyat*) of the essences of the quiddities of things and the establishment of their essentials and accidentals for them, even the being originated in time of temporal entities and the eternity of the established [entities] (*thābitāt*), each of these, one by one, is a demonstration for the principality of being.

A Subsidiary Section in which there is Verification, and a Verification Containing Subsidiaries

From these explanations and clarifications it has become manifest that the concept ‘being’ is a single and real title (*'unwān*) and denotative (*ḥikāyat*), which is by-essence the contrary of non-existence and repels non-existence, [just as] non-existence is the contrary and remover of it. And that reality is existent by-essence, without any restrictive modality, and everything other than that reality is existent through the intermediacy of it, and since the concept ‘existent’ is true of all existent quiddities. And that which makes correct the applicability of the derivative (*mushtaq*) is [one of five attributes]:

Either, a) the subsistence (*qiyām*) of its origin [of derivation] (*mabda'*), is by-essence the subject by virtue of real, concrete (*inḍimāmī*) subsistence—as for example the applicability of ‘black’ for a body, because the origin [of derivation] of ‘black’, which is blackness, inheres in the body by concrete subsistence;

Or, b) the subsistence of the origin [of derivation] is conceptual and abstract (*i'tibārī-yi intizā'ī*)—as for example the applicability of the concept 'above' for the sky, since its origin [of derivation], which is 'above-ness' inheres in the sky by way of abstract subsistence, since 'above-ness' is one of the intellectual-constructs and secondary intelligibles;

Or, c) the actualization and individualization of the origin [of derivation] is in the essence of the subject in such a way that it is the subject in the manner of particularity, that is to say it is the particular of that essence—as for example the applicability of the concept 'human' by-essence for a certain individual through consideration of the realization of a 'portion' (*hiṣṣah*) of it in the essence of that individual;

Or, d) there is identity of the origin with the whole of the essence of the subject—as for example, the applicability of 'blackness' for 'black' since the origin [of derivation] of 'black' is precisely 'blackness';

Or [finally], e) the unification of the origin as predicate with the essence of the subject in being—as for example, the applicability of 'rational' for 'animal' and vice-versa, since the human soul, which is the origin of the concept 'rational', is unified with the animal soul, which is the origin of the concept 'animal'.

Because the verified and affirmed truth of the matter is that the origins of the essentials of compound quiddities, through real compounding, are unified in being; for otherwise their predication of one another would not be permissible by any consideration, even the unconditioned consideration as many of the scholars (*muḥaṣṣilīn*) have stated. The reason for this is that the predication of the essentials of one another, like the predication of each of them of the possessor of the essential, is common attributive predication—and what is indicated by attributive predication is the unity of the subject and predicate in the external being of the object predicated, whilst there is difference between the concepts, essentially and not merely through consideration; for the consideration of the intellect cannot unify separate entities in reality and according to reality.

And the conjecture that the subsistence (*qiyām*) of the origin of the genus in the origin of the differentia—as they have said, *the nature is like the purposive cause (al-'illah al-mufīdah) for the nature of the differentia*—is what makes correct the predication of the essentials, is barred. This is because, the subsistence from it (*qiyām 'anhu*) is not 'that which makes correct' (*muṣaḥḥih*) the applicability, even though 'from it' itself (*naḥs-i 'anhu*) does make correct. That is to say, it is not the essence of the emanating entity (*ṣādir*) that makes correct the applicability of [the concept] 'emanating entity', even though it is emanation in itself that makes correct the applicability [of that concept]; just like the Act of the First Origin, exalted be His Majesty, which is the source of the applicability of all of the action-related Attributes for Him—or furthermore, the act of every agent makes correct the applicability of the term derived from that act for the agent, as opposed to the recipient of action;

for otherwise it would be permissible for every effect to be predicated of its cause; in addition to the fact that this meaning does not make correct the predication of the differentia of the genus.

And in the terminology of the transcendent theosophers, what is meant by 'derived [term]' is a concept that may be predicated univocally without the intermediary of lexical derivation or the addition of [the word] 'possessing' to it. And the meaning of 'origin' [of derivation] in their terminology is that thing by which the concept of the predicate is established for the subject, and by consideration of which there is predication of one of the other.

We say, that which makes correct the applicability of the concept 'existent' for things is not outside these [five aforementioned] alternatives, and the origin of the predicate in the predication of the concept 'existent' of things is not the concept 'being.' This is because [the concept 'being'] is also in need of an origin of predication for the applicability of [the concept] 'existent.' Therefore the origin of the predication of 'existent' of things is the reality of being, and that which makes correct the predication of 'existent' of quiddities cannot be the concrete (*inḍimāmī*) subsistence (*qiyām*) of an individual of being through the quiddity. This is because the subsistence (*qiyām*) of the reality of being or a real individual of it through the quiddity by real concrete subsistence—in reality and without the action of the intellect nor the consideration of being with the quiddity in the receptacle (*ẓarf*) of action and consideration, and the divesting of the quiddity from it in that receptacle—is neither intelligible in the mind nor in the external world. For otherwise it would follow that quiddity would be actualized in reality, not simply on the level of its essence by quiddity-related individuation, before being subsisted in it (and before being subsisted in quiddity); for quiddity is in reality non-existent, even though it has priority in essence, though not priority in time. This is because the negation of both contraries (*irtifā'-i naqāḍayn*) in reality is impossible—even though it is permissible in some level of reality, and this is precisely the issue of the subsistence of the non-existent (*thubūt-i ma'dūm*) before being—and the nullity of this [idea] is necessarily established, for otherwise either: if there is no plurality in being there would be the precedence of being over itself; or if there is plurality in being then there would either be an infinite regress of beings if the chain in the levels did not return to a priority-holding being, or there would be circularity, if it did return to such a being. The nature of the implication of these implications is the implication of the priority of the place of subsistence and the qualified entity over the subsisting entity and the quality in the receptacle of subsistence and qualification, by necessary judgment of the intellect.

And since it has been established that the concept 'being' has a reality and an individual in reality and its individual is not limited to being a conceptual (*i'tibārī*) and abstract individual; rather the conceptualization and abstraction of a conceptual (*i'tibārī*) entity is after the actualization of the real individual. In existent quiddities that which makes correct the applicability of the concept 'existent' for the

quiddities is not subsistence [deriving] from abstraction, because the applicability of the concept 'existent' for the concept 'being' and its abstract individual is also in need of something to make it correct (*muṣaḥḥiḥ*). And since neither the concept 'being' nor its real individual is on the level of any quiddity as a part or as the whole of its (quiddity-related) essence, that which makes correct the applicability of the concept 'existent' for the quiddities is not the actualization of the origin of the concept 'existent' in the essences of each quiddity—whether being part or being identical to the whole of the essence. And since these alternatives are all invalid, that which makes correct the applicability of the concept 'existent' for the quiddities is the unification of its origin with them. And from this explanation it is manifest that that which makes correct the applicability of the concept 'existent' for the reality of being is the identity of its origin with the whole of this reality.¹ This is because the reality of being has no part—neither intellectual nor external—and does not subsist in itself, the first point being invalidated by demonstration and the second by necessity. Therefore, it has been established that being has a single reality and that reality pervades (*sārī*) all existents, whether of the category of being or of the category of quiddities; and the applicability of the concept 'existent' for that reality is essential, and for other than that reality accidental.

And as for whether there is a multiplicity actualized for the reality of being, such that in every existent quiddity there is an individual of it united with that quiddity, or whether a single individual of being permeates all quiddities and the concept 'being' has no more than one individual, giving this matter its due—that is the explanation that multiplicity is also actualized for being and that the concept 'being' has established individuals—requires the explanation of certain principles that I shall mention.

2. Discussing the Ideas of Western Philosophers

The seventh question

European philosophers, like the theologians of that land, believe in an eternal (*qadīm*), omniscient, pre-eternal (*azalī*) and sempiternal (*abadī*) Creator, comprehensive of all attributes of perfection, considering the attributes to be identical to the Essence. They consider servants [of God] to be responsible for their actions and that the world is the best of all the possibilities that could be brought into existence; although they accept that there is a negation of [perfect] order, nonetheless it is better than all other possibilities. Their proofs are precisely those proofs that the philosophers and theologians of Iran have expressed. Among the European philosophers that believe this are: Descartes, Bacon, Leibnitz, Fenelon and Bossuet.

1. i.e. Alternative d) above.

Another group of the philosophers of Europe do not believe in a Creator comprehending those attributes of perfection; rather, they do not believe in a Creator and say that potential (*quwwah*) and matter were and are eternal and imperishable (*lā yufnā*), and that that potential and that matter are not separated from one another, that is to say, matter without potential and potential without matter are not possible. And from the coincidence of that matter and that potential this world has been and is composed, and [likewise is] that which has been and will be. Examples [of this group] are the German philosophers, the well-known of whom being Kant and Fichte. And another group say there is one Being that manifests and appears in appropriate (*muqtaḍiyyah*) forms, and that which is seen is the aspects (*shu'ūnāt*) and appearances of that [Being] and nothing else. [And that Being is] pre-eternal and sempiternal in the perfection of perfection. And this group are few.

Of that which has been presented in these questions, nothing is the belief of the author and the questioner save that which is the outer meaning of the most luminous *sharī'ah*. In some places, when a belief has been expressed as attributed to myself, this was purely by way of asking the question such that the matter would be made clear.

The answer to the seventh question

The majority of theologians do not maintain that the Attributes of the Essence of the Necessary Being, exalted be His Majesty, are identical to His Essence. Rather, the Ash'arites consider the Attributes to be additional to the Essence, and consider the Attributes to be eternal, believing in the 'eight eternal' (*qudamā-yi thamāniyah*). The Karrāmiyyah also consider the Attributes to be additional to the Essence, although they maintain that they are non-eternal. The Mu'tazilites do not believe in essential Attributes for the Necessary Being, but rather consider the Essence to take the place of the Attributes, saying that the effects of the Attributes follow from the Essence. And the matter and potential (*quwwah*) that some of the European philosophers believe in are, just as it appears, precisely the prime-matter and form that the Peripatetic philosophers believe in, such that they consider form to be that which inheres (*hāll*) and prime-matter to be the locus of inherence (*maḥall*), saying that each is in need of the other in such a way that it does not imply circularity. That is to say, prime-matter by-essence requires form as such (*ṣūrat-i muṭlaqah*), and that form is constituent (*muqawwim*) of it; and that form is in need of prime-matter for individuation. And all bodies are composed of these two, and between them there is mutual implication, such that they are never separated. However, this belief does not imply rejection of the Necessary Being, exalted be His Majesty, since the Peripatetics whilst believing this point have established the Necessary Being by definitive demonstration. And as for the belief of one group of European philosophers who have said that there is only a single Being, this issue has been explained in detail, so please refer to the preceding points.

As for that which was written in the questions, that it simply takes the form of a question [rather than a belief] is a clear statement, for religious [conviction] is separate from scientific discussion, and is different from the string of games of ‘*mullās*’ that sometimes pass in ‘why?’ and ‘we do not agree’, and with which are bought a weak heart and a tired body. The way of salvation is that a human, after becoming aware of the main creedal issues, make the basis of his own belief that he accept whatever is in accordance with the beliefs of the infallible Imams, upon them be peace, and that he reject whatever is not in accordance with them. This much is salvific, save a few beliefs upon which the law and religion depend. And given that this much is not the source of the perfection of the soul in knowledge—just as in reports the Folk of the Household of Infallibility, upon them be peace, have praised and glorified knowledge and those who know; and the creation was created for the sake of knowledge. And as Khwājah Ṭūsī, sanctified be his secret, in the beginning of the natural philosophy section of his commentary on the *Ishārāt* has stated, he who has become knowledgeable of the purposes of the Origin and the Return in detail *hath certainly achieved a great victory* (33:71); and as in the Divine Book it is also stated that *he who has been given wisdom has been given abundant good* (2:269). Studying sciences (*ma‘ārif*) brings about the perfection of the human soul, though in such a way that the aforementioned general belief is preserved.

Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī

Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī (d. 1306/1888) often referred to as Āqā (Master), was born in Qumshah, a village near Isfahan, around the year 1241/1825–26. He studied philosophy in Isfahan with Mullā Muḥammad Ja'far Lāhijī, himself an accomplished student of Ākhūnd Mullā 'Alī Nūrī, and with Nūrī's son, Mīrzā Ḥasan. Qumsha'ī studied 'irfān (gnosis) with Sayyid Raḍī Lārijānī (d.1270/1853–54) and may have also studied with Mīr Sayyid Ḥasan Ṭāliqānī. Qumsha'ī came to be known as one of the great masters of 'irfān-i naẓarī (theoretical gnosis) and attracted a number of fine students. He began teaching in a *madrasah* in Isfahan but as Tehran became a major centre of philosophical activity, he, along with a number of other well-known teachers, moved there around the year 1294/1877. He is in fact one of the founding members of what has come to be known as the School of Tehran. He taught a wide range of subjects in traditional sciences but was best known for his mastery in the intellectual sciences (*ma'qūlāt*).¹

Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā, the editor of Qumsha'ī's treatise on *walāyah*, or spiritual guardianship (William Chittick, the translator of this chapter, translates *walāyah* here as 'friendship'), wrote that there are thirteen extant works by Qumsha'ī, most of them short and still in manuscript form. His only longer treatise is his glosses on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*, and also his glosses (*ta'liqāt*) to Ṣadrā's *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* (Divine Witnesses). Among Qumsha'ī's printed works are three Arabic treatises of four to five pages each: *Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd bal al-mawjūd* (Treatise on the Oneness of Existence, or rather, the Existent), translated here;² *Mawḍū' al-khilāfat al-kubrā* (The Subject of the Greatest Vicegerency)

1. When he came to Tehran, Peripatetic philosophy was being taught there by Abu'l-Ḥasan ibn Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, also known as Jilwah (Splendour), who published among other things notes (*ḥawāshī*) on Mullā Ṣadrā's *Asfār*. It is said that when Qumsha'ī began teaching philosophy in Tehran, the brilliance of his mind and his strong pedagogical ability overshadowed the other grand masters, men such as Jilwah. His students were said to have joked, 'Jilwah az jilwah uftād' ('Splendour fell from splendour')

2. Lithographed with Ibn Turkah Iṣfahānī's *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* (Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī,

and *Risālah fī taḥqīq al-asfār al-arba‘ah* (Treatise on Research into the ‘Four Journeys’).¹ Qumsha’i also wrote poetry (*ghazals*)² in the style of Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Irāqī and took the penname Ṣahbā (Wine), but few of his poems have survived.³

Both of the texts translated here should be considered as elaborations on philosophical themes, as well as introductions to Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī’s *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*. Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), a student of ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335), produced, in the opinion of many, the most influential commentary on the *Fuṣūṣ* of Ibn ‘Arabī in the Persianate world, whereas Kāshānī’s commentary became more popular in Arab countries. The title of his short treatise on *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which was first published during the author’s lifetime, is accompanied by the following note: ‘and this [treatise] is connected with the first chapter of the *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* of al-Qayṣarī.’⁴

In this chapter we have included two treatises by Qumsha’i: *Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd bal al-mawjūd* (Treatise on the Oneness of Existence, or Rather, the Existent) and two-thirds of *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: Dar mabāḥith-i walāyat* (Addendum to the Ringstone on Seth from ‘The Ringstones of Wisdom’: On the Topics of Friendship).

In the treatise on *waḥdat al-wujūd*, Qumsha’i offers an explanation of the concept of *wujūd* and various technical terms concerning it used by Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers. In his exposition, Qumsha’i clarifies the distinction between a concept that is *lā bi-sharṭ* (unconditional), or ‘not having any conditions’; and one that is *bi-sharṭ-i lā*, negatively conditioned, or ‘having the condition of “negation”’. Qumsha’i’s elaboration on Ibn ‘Arabī’s concept of *wujūd* in its unqualified (*muṭlaq*), sense whether by unqualifiedness (*iṭlāq*) or by qualifiedness (*taqyīd*) is a fascinating philosophical notion. Ibn ‘Arabī’s disciple, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī’s rendition of this argument are the concepts of *lā-ta‘ayyun*, the Non-entification (the Unknown Essence of the Real in itself) and *al-ta‘ayyun al-awwal*, the First Entification (God as the Self-Disclosing Real).

The second and much longer treatise was published with the Persian title *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: Dar mabāḥith-i walāyat* (Addendum to the Ringstone on Seth from ‘The Ringstones of Wisdom’: On the Topics of Friendship). *Walāyah*

1316/1899), pp. 218–221. Also published in Āshtiyānī’s edition of al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Tehran, 1375/1996), pp. 25–28.

1. Lithographed on the margin of Mullā Ṣadrā, *Sharḥ al-hidāyat al-athīriyyah* (Tehran, 1313/1896), pp. 394–397.

2. A *Ghazal* is a poetic form similar to a sonnet consisting of couplets that share a rhyme and a refrain, each line sharing the same metre.

3. For more information see the introduction to the edition of the text on *walāyah* translated here: Manūchīhr Ṣadūqī Suhā, *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: Dar mabāḥith-i walāyat* (Qazwin, 1354/1975). For examples of Qumsha’i’s poetry, see pp. 10–13.

4. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, in his annotated edition of Qayṣarī’s commentary, provides the treatise as the first footnote of Chapter One of Qayṣarī’s introduction, attaching it to the word ‘Being’ in its title, which is ‘On Being, and that It is the Real’.

(or *wilāyah*), translated here as 'friendship', but also possessing several other meanings, is a concept that has been much discussed in various fields of Islamic scholarship, in particular Shi'ī theology, Sufism and even political philosophy. While the basic root of this word means primarily 'to be near', it also has other meanings and in varied contexts has led to such translations as sanctity, sainthood, assistance, authority, and power.

William Chittick, the translator of the sections included here explains the concept of *wilāyah* as follows:

In the context of Qumshā'ī's discussion, friendship seems to be the most appropriate English term, not least because he highlights *walāyah*'s correlativity—the fact that it demands two *walīs*, who share a single attribute relative to each other. None of the other English renderings would make sense if one of the two *walīs* were God. Nor should we forget that the Qur'ān ascribes *awliyā'* or friends to Satan, not just to God and human beings.

Qumshā'ī treats the concept of *walāyah* in the context of Twelver Shi'ism, from a Shi'ī gnostic and theological perspective, while maintaining his differences with Ibn 'Arabī when it comes to ascribing the highest degrees of *walāyah* to specific human beings. For Shi'ism, the *walī* par excellence is 'Alī, and while one may find grounds for a similar opinion according to Ibn 'Arabī, when the latter speaks of the 'Seal' of the friends, he typically mentions Jesus while implying that this title is befitting of himself as far as the specific seal of Muḥammadan *walāyah*/*wilāyah* is concerned. Qumshā'ī alludes to the fact that the expression 'Seal of the Friends' (*khātam al-awliyā'*) has many connotations which may in fact include Ibn 'Arabī's claim to be the Seal, but simultaneously maintains that he will rank lower than both 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the Twelfth Imam (the Mahdī).

Qumshā'ī resolves conflicting interpretations of the identity of the Seal by categorizing two basic types of friendship: the general, which pertains to all believers and indeed to all of creation; and the specific, which pertains to the 'spiritual stations' (*maqām*) achieved by the Prophet Muḥammad and the 'Muḥammadans'. The latter are those who are 'upon his heart' (*alā qalbihi*), meaning that by following him, they have achieved his spiritual qualities and characteristics. In this regard, there are then two basic sorts of friendship: unqualified (*muṭlaq*), which participates in the Self-disclosure (*tajallī*) of the very Essence of God; and qualified (*muqayyad*), which is limited to the Self-disclosure of one or several of the Divine Names. Qumshā'ī argues that unqualified friendship is the innermost reality of the Prophet Muḥammad whose friendship, however, was concealed by his prophetic function, and during his time the unqualified seal of the Muḥammadan Friends became manifest in Imam 'Alī and at the end of time will be manifested in the Mahdī, who is also the unqualified Seal of the Muḥammadan Friends. As for Jesus, he is the seal of general friendship of the Abrahamic tradition, not

the specific Muḥammadan friendship, and Ibn ‘Arabī is the Seal of the qualified Muḥammadan friendship.

M. Aminrazavi

Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd bal al-mawjūd

Translated for this volume by William Chittick from Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd bal al-mawjūd* (lithograph edition).¹

The possessors of hearts among the shaykhs and gnostics have agreed on the oneness of existence [*wujūd*]²—or rather, the Existent (*mawjūd*)—and that It is an actual Ipseity [*huwiyyah* 'ayniyyah], realized [*mutaḥaqqaq*] in Its very Essence. They have disagreed, however, on the reality of the Necessary—exalted is Its Name! Is It the existence that is taken as conditioned neither by the things nor by their non-existence [*lā bi-sharṭ al-ashyā' wa 'adamihā*]? In other words, is It the very nature [*ṭabī'ah*]² of existence as It is in Itself? In their view, this is called the Ipseity that Pervades the Necessary and the Contingent [*al-huwiyyah al-sāriyyah fi'l-wājib wa'l-mumkin*], the Unknown Unseen [*al-ghayb al-majhūl*], the Unseen of the Ipseity [*ghayb al-huwiyyah*], and the Wondrous Griffon [*al-'anqā' al-mughrib*], because It is neither attained by the intellects of the rational thinkers nor trapped by the imaginings of the philosophers. Thus it is said in Persian,

No one can hunt the griffon—take back your snare!
Your snare will never catch anything but wind.

Or, is It the existence that is taken as conditioned by the non-existence of things (*bi-sharṭ 'adam al-ashyā'*), which is named the level of Exclusive Unity [*aḥadiyyah*], the First Unseen, the First Entification [*al-ta'ayyun al-awwal*], and existence as negatively conditioned [*bi-sharṭ lā*]?

A group of them hold the first view, and a group the second. The two groups agree that the existence that is general [*'āmm*] and deployed [*munbasiṭ*] among the things and the fixed and external entities [*al-a'yān al-thābitah wa'l-khārijah*], [in other words, fixed] in [the Divine] Knowledge [*al-'ilm*] and [found] in the outside realm [*al-'ayn*]²—which in the station of Knowledge is called the All-Merciful Breath and the Most Holy Effusion [*al-fayḍ al-aqdas*] and in the station of the outside realm the Holy Effusion, the Second Real, and the Real Through Which Creation Takes Place [*al-ḥaqq al-makhlūq bih*]²—is the shadow [*ẓill*] of

1. I follow the text as found in the lithograph edition published during Qumsha'ī's lifetime (appended to *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, pp. 218–221) and also take help from Āshtiyānī's edition, which has a number of relatively minor discrepancies.

2. 'Nature' is being used in Avicenna's sense to designate what he calls a 'natural universal' (*kullī ṭabī'ī*), that is, the reality or quiddity of a thing without regard to its existence or non-existence.

that Reality, and that a thing's shadow is the same [*ʿayn*] as it in one respect, and other [*ghayr*] than it in another respect.

Verification of this station requires an introduction: It is that the object denoted [*miṣdāq*] essentially [*bi'l-dhāt*] by any concept [*mafhūm*] is that from which the concept is abstracted [*intizā'*] while all delimiting and causal modes [*al-ḥaythiyyāt al-taqyīdiyyah wa'l-ta'īliyyah*] that are other than it and predicated [*ḥaml*] of it are disregarded. Otherwise, the denoted object is not essentially denoted, nor is the essential essential. Thus, the concept of blackness is abstracted from its very nature, and one disregards the fact that it is not whiteness and any other attributions [*iḍāfāt*] and standpoints [*i'tibārāt*]. Hence a thing's essence and essentialities are predicated of it by essential necessity [*al-ḍarūrah al-dhātīyyah*]. If the essence is beginningless [*azālī*], then the necessity is essential and beginningless, or else it would have to be essential and not beginningless.

Now that the ground has been prepared, we say: The concept of existence is abstracted from its reality and predicated of it in respect of the very essence of that nature, while disregarding all the modes and standpoints, whether causal or delimiting. So, it is predicated of it by essential necessity. Given that this nature is beginningless—otherwise it would have an existent cause and it would be necessary for the thing to be prior to itself—predicating the concept of it is by beginningless necessity. Since this is the case, the existence that is taken as unconditioned is the Real that is necessary by essence, not that which is taken as negatively conditioned. For, this qualification [*qayd*] does not enter into the abstraction of the concept, its predication of It, and its beginningless necessity, because the concept that is abstracted from its very essence has in view neither the other nor the nonexistence of the other.¹

In addition, the general existence that has intercourse [*muḥāma'*] with the things is a shadow of the existence that is unconditioned, not of that which is negatively conditioned. Although the two are One Entity [*ʿayn wāḥid*], the standpoints are different, so it has intercourse with the things. For, that which is taken as negatively conditioned refuses to come together [*ijtimā'*] with the things.

You should think about His words, 'He is with you' (57:4); His words, 'He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward' (57:3); His words, 'You did not throw when you threw, but God threw' (8:17); His words, 'We shall show them Our signs upon the horizons and in themselves, until it is clear to them that He is the Real' (41:53); the words of the Commander of the Faithful and Master of the Unitarians, '[He is] inside the things without mixture, outside the things without separation';² and the words of the Prophet, 'Were you to be let

1. In place of this last clause, Āshtiyānī's text has the following, whose meaning is clearer: 'because the concept is abstracted from Its very essence without having in view the other, but qualification is to have the other in view.'

2. 'Alī's *Nahj al-balāghah* has many similar sentences, including this from the first sermon: 'He is with everything without linkage, and other than everything without separation.'

down to the lowest earth, you would fall upon God.' All of these indicate what I have conveyed to you.

You may say: If the reality of the Necessary is the very Nature [of existence], and that Nature is with every existent, then the reality of the Necessary is with every existent. It is either the same as it or part of it, for existence is either the same as the existent or part of it.

I say: I have pointed to the fact that the concept of existence is abstracted from existence's Nature while disregarding all modes and standpoints save the mode of its essence. As for the quiddities of things, the concept [of existence] is abstracted from them in respect of both their delimiting and their causal modes. And as for the existences [*wujūdāt*] of things, the concept is abstracted from them in respect of their causal modes. Hence, there is nothing of these that is the very Nature, in contrast to the Necessary by essence.

One should think about His words, 'Nothing is as His likeness' (42:11); If the existences of the things were individual instances [*afrād*] of existence's Nature, they would be similar to Him—exalted is He beyond that!

You may say: Then He is not with the things, but He has said, 'He is with you' (57:4).

I say: General existence is with everything and is His shadow, as I pointed out, and a thing's shadow is the same as it in one respect; so He is with everything.

In sum, existence taken as unconditioned—that is, the Nature of existence in respect of the fact that it is it—is existent by beginningless, essential necessity. Any existent like this is the existence that is necessary by essence. Hence, the existence that is taken as unconditioned is the existence that is necessary by essence. The general, deployed existence is the same as it in one respect and other than it in another respect. In respect of the sameness [*'ayniyyah*], it makes oneness [*waḥdah*] correct, and in respect of the otherness [*ghayriyyah*], it makes manyness [*kathrah*] correct. Ontological [*wujūdī*] *tawḥīd* is correct through oneness, and through manyness are correct the diversity of the properties of the Necessary and the contingent, the descent and the ascent, the Origin and the Return, the nations and the religions, and the revealed laws and their rulings.

If you think about what has been said, another meaning will become apparent to you. This is that the oneness of existence is an individual [*shakhṣiyyah*] oneness. There is no existence and no *mawjūd* except He. The contingent existences are its manifestations, tasks, relations, and standpoints.

The existent is Thou in reality,
the rest are relations and standpoints.

Know also that existence, when Its Essence is considered under the mode of realization and sameness, is realized by its very Essence. Since It is necessary by Its

Essence, and since the Necessary Essence's quiddity is Its Is-ness (*inniyyah*),¹ there is no mode in It save the mode of existence. Since there is no mode in It save the mode of existence, nothing is with It. 'God was, and nothing was with Him; and He is now as He was.'² It is this that suggests that He is an existence that is negatively conditioned. And this is indeed the case, except that Its negative conditionality is one of the concomitants [*lawāzim*] of Its Essence and has no entrance [*dakhl*] into the existence³ of Its Essence.

You may say: Then what is the meaning of that Reality's 'pervasion' [*sarayān*] of the Necessary and the contingent?

I say: The meaning of pervasion is manifestation. He may be manifest by His very Essence to His Essence, and that is His pervasion of the Necessary. He may be manifest in the clothing of the Names and the Entities fixed in [His] knowledge, and He may be manifest in the clothing of the entities of the existences in the entities [of the cosmos] and the minds [*adhhān*], and these are His pervasion of the contingent. All are His essential tasks [*shu'yūnāt dhātiyyah*].⁴

So, in respect of the Ipseity, the existence that is taken as unconditioned is the same as the existence that is taken as negatively conditioned. The diversity is in the standpoints. To this He points with His words, 'Say: He is God, One' (112:1), for the word *He* is a pronoun that points to the Essence and to the fact that He has no Names. The word *God* is the Name of the Essence in respect of essential manifestation. The word *One* [*aḥad*] next to it shows that the name *God* here pertains to the Essence, for it is shared both by the Essence and by the Essence that comprehends all the Attributes. There are no descriptions or attributes in essential manifestation. Rather, the attributes are negated, just as ['Alī]—upon whom be peace—said, 'The perfection of *tawḥīd* is the negation of Attributes from Him.'⁵ In other words, the Unknown Unseen is the Essence that becomes manifest through Exclusive Unity [*aḥadiyyah*].⁶

1. This is a standard philosophical position. In other words, 'what God is' (*māhiyyatuhu*) is 'that He is' (*inniyyatuhu*), which is to say that God's Quiddity is none other than His Existence, whereas for everything else, existence and quiddity are conceptually distinct. Sabzawārī uses the same language when he says toward the beginning of his *Manzūmah, al-Ḥaqq māhiyyatuhu inniyyatuhu*, 'As for the Real, Its quiddity is Its Is-ness'. Izutsu and Muhaghegh translate this as, 'As for Truth, His Essence is His Existence.' *The Metaphysics of Sabzawārī* (Delmar, NY, 1977), p. 46.

2. The first two clauses are said to be a *ḥadīth*, and the third a clarification provided by Junayd. See Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany, NY, 1989), p. 393, n. 13.

3. Āshṭiyānī's text has *wujūb*, 'Necessity', in place of *wujūd*, 'existence'.

4. The term *sha'n* or 'task' is commonly employed by Ibn 'Arabī's followers to mean entity, reality, or thing; it derives from the verse, 'Each day He is upon a task' (55:29), which Ibn 'Arabī often discusses (see Chittick, *Sufi Path*, pp. 98–99).

5. As found toward the beginning of the first sermon of the *Nahj al-balāghah*, the sentence reads, 'The perfection of His *tawḥīd* is sincerity [*ikhhlāṣ*] for Him, and the perfection of sincerity for Him is to negate attributes from Him.'

6. One could better translate this last phrase by saying, 'through the fact of being *Aḥad*'.

Given that the word *One* can be ascribed in a negative [*salbī*] meaning—as it is here, for it negates all things from Him, or rather things as well as Attributes—it suggests that He is empty of things and lacks them, or rather, [empty] of Attributes and perfections. But He—exalted is He!— is all things and all Attributes and perfections through His Oneness. So He amended this with His words, ‘God is the Everlasting Refuge [*ṣamad*]’ (112:2). The Everlasting Refuge is the All-Comprehensive One [*al-wāḥid al-jāmi'*]. Then He argued for this with His words, ‘He has not given birth and He was not given birth to’ (112:3). This is to say that nothing has emerged from Him, and He has not emerged from anything. Otherwise He would be defective [*nāqis*] by the emergence of something from Him, or His emergence from something.

So, His Exclusive Unity is because of the entifications of the things [*ta'ayyunāt al-ashyā'*],¹ and His being the Everlasting Refuge is by the fact that their realities are contained [*indimāj*] in Him.

This is the clarification of what is meant in this station.

but Qumsha'ī has in mind the long-standing contrast made by Ibn 'Arabī's followers between *aḥadiyyah* (exclusive unity) and *wāḥidiyyah* (inclusive unity). He wants to show that the Qur'ān makes this distinction in *Sūrat al-ikhhlāṣ* with its mention of the Divine Names *Aḥad* and *Ṣamad*. Ibn 'Arabī himself does not contrast *aḥadiyyah* and *wāḥidiyyah*, but he often says that *aḥad* and *wāḥid* designate respectively the Unity of the One (*aḥadiyyat al-aḥad*) and the Unity of Manyness (*aḥadiyyat al-kathrah*). See Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God* (Albany, NY, 1998), pp. 167 ff.

1. That is, the fact that each thing, by the fact of its thingness, is an entity, a quiddity, something other than the Essence, the Real Existence. This latter, in the terminology favoured by Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī and his followers, is ‘non-entified’ (*ghayr muta'ayyan*); or, it is ‘the Nonentification’ (*al-lā-ta'ayyun*).

ADDENDUM TO THE RINGSTONE ON SETH FROM 'THE RINGSTONES
OF WISDOM': ON THE TOPICS OF FRIENDSHIP

Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: dar mabāḥith-i walāyat

Translated for this volume by William Chittick from Muḥammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī, *Dhayl-i faṣṣ-i shīthī-yi fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam: dar mabāḥith-i walāyat*, ed. Manūchihr Ṣadūqī Suhā (Qazvin, 1354 Sh./1975), pp. 1–24.¹

Walāyah derives from *waly* in the meaning of nearness (*qurb*).

[1] It may be general (*'āmm*), pertaining generally to all the faithful. To this is the allusion in God's words, 'He is the friend of those who have faith; He brings them forth from the darknesses into the light' (2:257). For, if He is the friend of those who have faith, they are also His friends, given that nearness is a relative thing by which both sides are described.

Faith (*īmān*) has levels and degrees: One is decisive and firm belief (*i'tiqād*) that accords with the actual situation (*al-wāqī'*), without [the aid of logical] demonstration (*burhān*). This is like the belief of the imitator (*muqallid*), which is neither derived from nor supported by demonstration; rather, it is supported by the truthful report-giver (*al-mukhbir al-ṣādiq*). Another is certain, decisive, firm knowledge that accords with the actual situation and is supported by demonstration. This is stronger and more elevated than the first. It is like the faith of the folk of considerate reason (*ahl al-naẓar*). Another is witnessed, illuminative knowledge (*al-'ilm al-shuhūdī al-ishrāqī*) that accords with the actual situation; this is called 'sound unveiling' (*al-kashf al-ṣaḥīḥ*) and 'the eye of certainty' (*'ayn al-yaqīn*). It is stronger than the two preceding levels; it is like the faith of the folk of wayfaring (*sulūk*) and the companions of unveilings. Still another is also witnessed, illuminative knowledge, but the witnesser (*shāhid*) is the same as the witnessed (*mashhūd*), and the witnessed is the same as the witnesser. This is called 'the truth of certainty' (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*). It is possible, however, that the knowledge of someone with faith be such that it is the knowledge of certainty in some beliefs, the eye of certainty in others, and the truth of certainty in still others. This [third level] is stronger than the preceding levels. And all of these are friends of God, and God is their friend.

Their degrees are disparate in keeping with the degrees of their faith, but they have no deliverance (*takhalluṣ*) from hidden *shirk*.²

1. The translation follows the text as edited by S. Suhā. For examples of Qumsha'ī's poetry, see pp. 10–13. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī also includes the text, with some minor discrepancies, as a footnote to his edition of al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, pp. 440–463.

2. It is this characteristic that distinguishes the 'general' friends of God from the 'specific' friends who will now be discussed. *Shirk* is to associate others with God and is opposed to *tawḥīd*, the assertion of God's unity. The *ḥadīth* literature mentions 'hidden shirk' (*al-shirk*

[2] Or [friendship may be] specific (*khāṣṣ*), pertaining specifically to the companions of the hearts [*aṣḥāb al-qulūb*] and the folk of God (*ahl Allāh*), those who have been annihilated (*fanā*) in His Essence, subsist (*baqā*) through His subsistence, and possess the Nearness of Obligatory Works (*qurb al-farā'id*).¹ It is alluded to in God's words, 'Surely the friends of God—no fear shall be upon them, neither shall they sorrow' (10:62); and in the *ḥadīth qudsī*, 'My friends are under My domes.' This friendship is specified for the perfect (*kāmil*) among His servants, those who have scattered and shed the garments of human nature (*bashariyyah*), stepped beyond the holiness of the Invincibility and entered into the holiness of the Divinity.² These are the true asserters of *tawḥīd* (*muwaḥḥidūn*).

This friendship also has degrees. One of them is the annihilation of the servant in His Essence by the Divine Self-disclosure (*al-tajallī al-ilāhī*) and his subsistence through Him, by taking off contingent existence (*al-wujūd al-imkānī*) and putting on Real Existence (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqqānī*). This is at the end of the first of the four journeys (*al-asfār al-arba'ah*)³ and the beginning of the second, which is the journey from the Real in the Real through the Self-disclosures of the Names. This is the station of Two-Bow's Length (*qāb qawsayn*):⁴ one bow from the beginning to the end of the level of Inclusive Unity (*wāḥidiyyah*) by means of the Divine tasks (*shu'ūn*); the other bow from the level of Inclusive Unity to Exclusive Unity

al-khafī), which is contrasted with 'open shirk' (*al-shirk al-jalī*). The latter is to believe openly in more than one God, as a polytheist might, and the former is to assert *tawḥīd* with the tongue but to follow other gods in the heart. One of the most commonly mentioned of these other gods is caprice or whim (*hawā*), as in the verse, 'Have you seen the one who takes his caprice as his god?' (25:43).

1. The nearness of obligatory works is much discussed by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers along with the nearness of supererogatory works (*nawāfil*). The distinction between the two is rooted in the famous *ḥadīth qudsī* in which God speaks about the servants achieving a nearness such that God becomes his hearing and eyesight. For a detailed discussion of the *ḥadīth* and these two sorts of nearness, see Chittick, *Sufi Path* 325–331.

2. The terminology here derives from a standard way of discussing the 'five Divine Presences' (*al-ḥaḍarāt al-ilāhiyyah al-khams*), that is, the five worlds or levels of being in which the all-comprehensive Name Allāh makes manifest the full range of its properties and traces. These can be enumerated as Kingdom (*mulk*, the corporeal world) or Humanity (*nāsūt*, the physical, human realm), Sovereignty (*malakūt*, the spiritual realm), Invincibility (*jabarūt*, the realm of the Divine Acts), Divinity (*lāhūt*, the realm of the Divine Names and Attributes), and He-ness (*hāhūt*, the Essence, God in Himself).

3. This expression is of course the popular title of Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus, but discussion of the four journeys long predates that work. Notice also that, as mentioned in the introduction, Qumsha'ī has a separate treatise on the four journeys.

4. The term Two-Bow's Length is derived from the Qur'an's account of Muḥammad's night journey in 53:9, a verse that Qumsha'ī will cite later on. It is taken as a reference to what the philosophers usually call *al-mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*, 'the Origin and the Return.' The two bows or arcs (*qaws*) together make up 'the circle of existence' (*dā'irat al-wujūd*). First is the descending, cosmogonic arc that brings about creation; and second the ascending, culminating arc through which human beings attain their entelechy. For some of Ibn 'Arabī's seminal discussions of the two bows/arcs, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, pp. 233–237.

(*aḥadiyyah*) by means of the Essential Self-disclosures and tasks.¹ This friendship is specific to Muḥammad and the Muḥammadans, those who are his executors (*awṣiyāʾ*) and heirs (*warathah*)² by following him (*al-mutābaʿah lahu*).

As for the precedent prophets and their executors,³ those who were approved to attain this [level of friendship] attained it as a state (*ḥāl*), not a station (*maqām*).⁴ This is indicated by the fact that [Muḥammad] saw the greatest of them in the spheres during his Night Journey—each of them in a sphere, whether in its soul-ish or intellective level. And soul and intellect—that is, the souls of the spheres and their holy intellects—are His friends through the general, not the specific friendship, for their existences are contingent existences, not real existences. This is because Real Existence is a comprehensive (*jamʿī*), divine existence, and the existences of these are separative (*farqī*), contingent existences.

The spheres cannot attain and the angels cannot reach
what Adam's children grasp in their secret hearts.⁵

And, we are talking about stations, not states.

So, the specific friendship—which is the Muḥammadan friendship—may be qualified (*muqayyad*) by one of the [Divine] Names or its limits (*ḥudūd*); or it may be unqualified (*muṭlaq*) by limits and naked of qualifications (*quyūd*) in that it comprehends (*jāmiʿ*) the manifestation of all the Names and Attributes and finds in itself the modalities of the Self-disclosures of the Essence.

Thus the Muḥammadan friendship is unqualified and qualified, and each of these has degrees—the qualified [has them] through number, and the unqualified through intensity (*shiddah*). Each of them also has a Seal (*khātām*). It is possible for one of the knowers (*ʿulamāʾ*) of Muḥammad's community to be the Seal of the qualified friendship, and for one of his executors to be the Seal of the unqualified friendship. And it may be that the unqualified friendship is ascribed to the general friendship, and the qualified, Muḥammadan friendship to the specific friendship.

1. The contrast between inclusive and exclusive unity was remarked upon in the notes to the first treatise. Here Qumsha'ī takes the descending arc as the locus of manifestation for all the 'tasks', that is, the entities or realities that are embraced by God's inclusive unity, and the ascending arc as the means whereby travellers re-integrate multiplicity into God's exclusive unity.

2. By 'executors', Qumsha'ī seems to be referring to the Twelve Imams, and by 'inheritors' he seems rather to have in mind the 'Muḥammadan friends' such as Ibn 'Arabī. On the station of the Muḥammadans, see Chittick, *Sufi Path*, pp. 376–379.

3. According to Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, each of the seven great prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muḥammad) had twelve executors, most of whom he names. *Naṣṣ al-nuṣūṣ*, pp. 155–156.

4. In the general Sufi understanding, a state is a passing gift, and a station is a permanent acquisition. In whatever way the two may be contrasted, a station is higher than a state. See *Sufi Path* pp. 263–270.

5. The line is from the *Dīwān* of Sa'dī.

What I have mentioned repels the confusion and agitation concerning their words. It does not contradict their expressions, nor does it oppose the religious teachings (*diyānāt*).

So, we say, beginning our words anew and branching off from and elaborating upon what was mentioned:

The Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, is the Seal of the Friends through the unqualified, Muḥammadan friendship by way of the first unqualifiedness, and the Seal of the qualified, friendship by way of the second unqualifiedness. It does not matter if the witnessing Shaykh [Ibn 'Arabi] is the Seal of the qualified Muḥammadan friendship, and the Standing, Awaited Mahdī is the Seal of the unqualified friendship in the first meaning and the Seal of the qualified friendship in the second meaning. The difference between him and his ancestor 'Alī will come later.

Now, in order to clarify the manner in which each of them is specified for the station of sealhood that we have attributed to them, we say in elaboration that what is meant by 'the Seal of the Friends' is not someone after whom will come no more friends in time (*zamān*). Rather, what is meant is that his station is the highest level of friendship and the furthest degree of nearness such that no one is nearer to God than he; there is no level of nearness and friendship beyond his level.

So, the rightful friend and the unqualified ruler in nearness and friendship is the Master of the First and the Last, the Chosen of the Preceders and the Rejoiners,² the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, Muḥammad. For he is nearer to God than all else, because he is the locus of manifestation (*mazhar*) for the name God (*Allāh*), which comprehends all names, and he is the true Adam, whom God created in His form (*ṣūra*). Or rather, he is the same as that all-comprehensive name (*al-ism al-jāmi'*) in respect of being the locus of manifestation, for the locus of manifestation is the same as, and is the form of, the manifest, and the name is the same as the named. The distinction lies in the two modalities of manifestation: manifestation by essence and manifestation by attributes. The mutual distinction and separation is not because of his inadequacy in the stage of self-disclosure, but rather because of the impossibility for self-disclosure to be at the level of the Self-Discloser (*al-mutajallī*).

Nonetheless, when friendship becomes intensified and strengthened, it covers itself in the cover of prophethood and drapes itself in the drape of messengerhood, so it is hidden within them and concealed by them. In this there is a great secret and a far-reaching wisdom, but I do not care if I allude to it, for breasts are untrammelled and hearts vast, and praise belongs to God, the Vast, the Knowing.

1. *al-Mahdī al-qā'im al-muntaẓar*, i.e., the Twelfth Imam. Al-Qā'im, the Standing One, is taken as one of the Mahdī's several titles. It can signify that he has now arisen, because he was born and then went into 'occultation' (*ghaybah*) and dwells in the Unseen Realm (*ghayb*); and that he is standing and watching over the world, waiting for the appropriate time to return.

2. *al-Sābiqūn wa'l-lāhiqūn*. Qumsha'ī explains how he understands these two terms later in the text.

So, I say: God put His friend [Muḥammad] among His servants and placed His beloved among His trustees (*umanā*), for God's servants are God's trustees. This is because servanthood is acquiescence (*inqiyād*), and the servant does not step beyond the command of his master and patron. 'And your Lord has decreed that you serve none but Him' (17:23), and that decree is the very fact that they are servants of God. It is incumbent on the trustee to restore the trust (*amāna*) to its Owner,¹ but extraneous accidents impede the restoration of the deposited trust. Hence it is incumbent upon that friend, by virtue of his being 'a mercy to the worlds' (21:107), to help them restore the deposit. That restoration takes place only through their returning (*rujū*) to Him, because the deposit is nothing but their essences and selves. Part of His mercy toward them is that He makes their road smooth and guides them to a Straight Path. And there is no path that is not straight, because of His words, 'Guide us on the Straight Path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed, not of those against whom is wrath, nor of those who are astray' (1:5–7).

Hence [Muḥammad] is robed in the robe of the prophethood of both knowledge-giving (*ta'rīf*) and Law-giving (*tashrī*), so that he may aid them by taking them back and conveying them to God so as to restore the Trust.² For, knowledge-giving and Law-giving are guidance and instruction, and all of this requires the return of everyone to God. 'Surely unto God all affairs come home' (42:53). 'Surely we belong to God, and to Him we return.'³

'So remind those who fear My threat of the Qur'ān' (50:45). In other words, remind those who fear My threat that it will pass away and that they will come together with Me, for the 'Qur'ān' is the 'bringing together' (*jam*).⁴ This is because laudation acknowledges the truthfulness of the promise, not the threat, for the promise's truthfulness does not contradict the threat's passing away.⁵ This is demonstrated rationally

1. There is an allusion here to Qur'ān 4:58, 'God commands you to deliver trusts back to their folk.'

2. The distinction between these two sorts of prophecy is basic to the distinction that Ibn 'Arabī draws between prophet and friend; Qumsha'ī discusses it later in the treatise.

3. Qur'ān 2:156.

4. For some of the conclusions that Ibn 'Arabī draws from this primary signification of the word *qur'ān*, see *Sufi Path*, pp. 239–241.

5. Ibn 'Arabī often mentions thinkers who maintain that God will enact His threats (*infādh al-wa'id*), sometimes identifying them with the Mu'tazilites. He rejects their opinion because of God's Mercy. In section 47 of Chapter 198 (on 'The Breath of the All-Merciful'), he summarizes his own position, and refers along the way to the connection with praise and laudation that Qumsha'ī has just mentioned. He says, among other things, 'The Law descended in the tongue of the folk of the Messenger, so it addressed them with what accorded with their convention [*tawāfu*]. What accorded with their convention concerning someone described by generosity and perfection is that he enacts his promises, not his threats... It has come in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 'Nothing is more beloved to God than that He be praised,' and praising [*madḥ*] for passing over the evildoer is the utmost praise; so God is most worthy of it.' *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Cairo, 1911), vol. 2, p. 474, line 13.

by the fact that constraint (*qasr*) has no permanence and that everything seeks its own perfection. The verses about 'foreverness' (*khulūd*) do not contradict this, because that is 'as long as the heavens and the earth continue' (11:107–8). In other words, it is as long as the traces of the celestial and terrestrial natures remain among the Folk of the Fire. How could it be otherwise? For God says, 'O My servants who have been immoderate toward yourselves! Despair not of God's mercy! Surely God forgives all sins; surely He is the Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful' (39:53).

'Immoderation toward the self' takes place only through unbelief and disobedience, but God knows the secrets of affairs, so He called despairing of His Mercy 'unbelief' and 'disobedience'. He promised them forgiveness for all sins, and He described Himself as the Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful. It is necessary for Him to fulfil His covenant,¹ for He seeks praiseworthy laudation. Hence it is required that the final issue (*ma'āl*) of everyone be at mercy.²

As for His saying, 'God does not forgive that something be associated with Him, but He forgives what is less than that' (4:48), that is a threat. Threats are only for instilling fear and wariness, as He says, 'We send the signs', that is, the signs that threaten, 'only to instill fear' (17:59); ['We have turned about in it something of threats] that perhaps they may be wary' (20:113). But, He promises to pass over, for He says, 'and We shall pass over their ugly deeds' (46:16). Do not suppose that God will break His promise to His messengers. 'The Pen has dried over what shall be', and God knows the secrets of affairs. So, I am saying only that God's Mercy is vast, that 'His Mercy takes precedence over His Wrath', and that 'God does' in His kingdom 'as He wishes' (14:27).

Let us now return to the matter of friendship and the levels of the Seal within it. We say at the outset: Friendship is a Divine Attribute and one of the essential tasks that demand manifestation. He alludes to it with His words, 'He is the Friend, the Praiseworthy' (42:28). He has this Attribute generally in respect to everything other than God, not in respect to some things rather than others, because of the equality (*istiwā'*) of His relation to things. In commenting on *istawā' alā* (20:51), [the seventh Imam] Mūsā al-Kāẓim, said, 'He is equal toward everything, so nothing is nearer to Him than anything else.' Another version has, 'He is equal in (*istawā fi*) everything, so nothing far from Him is far, and nothing near to Him is near.'³

1. By saying 'it is necessary' (*wajaba*), Qumshā'ī is alluding to the distinction that Ibn 'Arabī draws between *rahmat al-imtīnān*, the mercy of free-gift, and *rahmat al-wujūb*, the mercy of necessity. The first embraces all things, and the second God makes necessary upon himself in the case of those who follow the prophets; reference is made to both in Qur'ān 7:156: 'My Mercy embraces everything, and I shall write it for those who are godwary.' See the beginning of the chapter on Solomon in the *Fuṣūṣ*; also Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism* (Tokyo, 1983), pp. 121 ff.

2. That everyone's 'final issue' will be at mercy is one of Ibn Arabī's frequent themes. See Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford, 2005), chapter 9.

3. Versions of this saying are given by Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār* (Beirut, 1983), vol. 3, pp. 336–337.

His form is also general and envelops everything other than God. This form that envelops everything other than God is nothing other than the fixed, Muḥammadan entity.¹ This one form is not a form of two distinct things horizontally (*fi'l-'ard*), so the two names are in vertical order (*tūl al-tartīb*). And, the name Friend is the non-manifest [*bāṭin*] of the name God, for friendship is more concealed than Godhood (*al-ilāhiyyah*). Hence friendship is the nonmanifest of Godhood, so it is the hidden secret and the secret that is masked by the secret. Godhood is the nonmanifest of the Muḥammadan Reality, so friendship is the nonmanifest of the Muḥammadan Reality, and this Reality is the manifest (*ẓāhir*) of the two and the form of the two. The manifest, moreover, is the same as the nonmanifest, and the nonmanifest is the same as the manifest. The difference and duality lie in the rational distinction, though they are united in existence.

As if wine, and no cup,
or cup, and no wine.²

So, the Muḥammadan Reality is the unqualified divine friendship that becomes manifest through the attributes of [Muḥammad's] perfection and the descriptions of his beauty. It is the all-comprehensive prophethood of knowledge-giving and Law-giving.

You have heard that a thing's manifestation is its being unveiled in one respect and its being veiled in another respect.³ So, friendship is both hidden and concealed by prophethood. By my life! Had [friendship] not been concealed within [prophethood] thereby making blindness general, had it not robed itself in that robe, and had it become manifest in its untrammelled, unmixed essence, the Muḥammadan Reality would have been incinerated (*iḥtirāq*), and, with its incineration, the heavens, the earth, and everything between the two would also have been incinerated. For, it is their source and their place of return, since there is nothing in existence save 'God, the One, the All-subjugating' [40:16]. He alluded to this with His words, 'If not for thee, I would not have created the spheres.'⁴

1. A fixed entity (*'ayn thābit*) is a thing (*shay'*) as known to God. Ibn al-'Arabi explains that there are two ways of looking at things or entities. Inasmuch as they are present in the knowledge of God—'God knows all things' (Qur'ān)—they are 'non-existent' (*ma'dūm*), that is, they have no existence in the world and are 'fixed' and unchanging, which is to say that God knows them as such always and forever. Inasmuch as they have been given existence—'When God desires a thing, He says to it "Be!"' (Qur'ān)—they are 'existent entities' (*a'yān mawjūdah*). The only difference between fixed and existent entities is that the latter are considered inasmuch as 'Be!' has been said to them. In terms of their thingness (*shay'iyyah*), the two sorts of entity are the same (*'ayn*). This thingness is what the philosophers call their 'quiddity' or 'whatness' (*māhiyyah*), as contrasted with their existence.

2. A famous line of Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, frequently quoted in Sufi texts.

3. A commonplace observation in Sufi texts. See Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), chapter 10.

4. This *ḥadīth qudsī*, addressed to the Prophet, is often quoted in this form. It is not found

Next, the unqualified, Divine, Muḥammadan friendship became manifest in the description of friendship and in the form of friendship, so it became the friend of God, the vicegerent of God, and the vicegerent of God's Messenger. Then it became manifest 'each day upon a task' (55:29) among its tasks and in every locus of manifestation through one of its descriptions. So, it became the proofs (*ḥujaj*)¹ of God, His vicegerents, and the vicegerents of His Messenger to the point where it became manifest in all of its attributes. Hence it became their Standing One (*qā'im*), their locus of manifestation, and the locus of manifestation for their executors. All of them are one light and one reality; their diversity lies in the manifestation of the attributes of their root reality, which is the unqualified, Divine, Muḥammadan Friendship. I am not saying that their fixed entities are diverse; no rather, there is one entity, fixed in the knowledge of the Divine Unseen, whose manifestations in knowledge are diverse in that homestead.

So, listen to what I am saying so as to conceive of that: I say that you understand 'quantity' (*miqdār*), for example, with your disengaged intellect (*'aql mujarrad*). This meaning is an intellective, disengaged form, without measure or shape. Then you imagine this disengaged, universal meaning with your imagining faculty. The meaning becomes a quantitative form, but you do not ascribe anything to it, nor do you take anything away from it. So, the one meaning became manifest first as disengaged and universal, and second as disengaged and particular. There is no difference in terms of adding something or subtracting something. The only difference is in the task and the manifestation.

You may say: The difference lies in disengaging (*tajrīd*) by the intellect and enclothing (*talbīs*) by imagination. No, intellect does not disengage quantity except from itself, and imagination does not enclothe it except in itself.

Now make this a staircase to the recognition that one entity may be numerous entities without difference in essence and accidents. The fixed, Muḥammadan Entity is the same as the entities of his executors and his vicegerents. Given that the friendship is one and the entity is one, and given that there is difference only in manifestation through the essential, latent attributes, ['Ali] spoke the truth with his words, 'The first of us is Muḥammad, the last of us is Muḥammad, the middlemost of us is Muḥammad, and all of us are Muḥammad.'²

Do not stop at the apparent meaning. He is named Muḥammad at first, in the

in the most authoritative *ḥadīth* collections, but some experts consider it authentic in the version, 'If not for thee, I would not have created this world [*al-dunyā*].' Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Aḥādīth-i mathnawī* (Tehran, 1347/1968), p. 172.

1. A reference to friends generally or to a certain sort of friend, evidenced by the typical understanding of 'Ali's saying, which Qumshā'ī quotes later, 'The earth will never be empty of God's proof.'

2. The first three clauses are part of a long saying of 'Ali addressed to Salmān al-Fārsī. Fayḍ Kāshānī cites them from *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn* by Rajab ibn Muḥammad al-Bursī in *Kalimāt maknūnah*, ed. 'Azīz Allāh al-'Aṭarūdī al-Qūchānī (Tehran, 1342/1963), p. 200.

middle, and at last, though his words, 'and all of us are Muḥammad', refute that. With this are eliminated the disagreement and contradiction in our words, 'Sometimes the Seal of the Muḥammadan Friendship is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and sometimes it is the promised, awaited Mahdī,' because both of them, or rather, all of them, are one light and one reality in essence and attributes. The diversity lies in the tasks and the manifestations in keeping with the diversity of the moments and the far-reaching, divine wisdom.

It is now obvious that the Seal of the Muḥammadan friendship is the Muḥammadan Reality, which took off the clothing of prophethood, became robed in the robe of friendship, and came to be manifest in the form of [Muḥammad's] inerrant executors. If you want, you can say 'Commander of the Faithful'; and if you want, you can speak of any of the inerrant Imams. However, their Standing One (*qā'im*) is the most worthy of that, because all the attributes become manifest in him. Given that this is the situation in the world of Knowledge and the Unseen, it is the same in the world of the outside realm (*'ayn*) and the Visible.

Then, when that Divine, Muḥammadan Friendship descends from the stages of necessity (*wujūb*) to the way-stations of contingency (*imkān*), the first of its way-stations is the station of the Divine Spirit. This is the station of Jesus, son of Mary. The proof of that is [God's words], 'His word that He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him' (4:171). So, he was the Spirit of God, and he was a friend, because of his nearness to the Real. He was also the Seal of the Friends in engendered being (*al-kawn*), because there is none nearer to God than he in the visible realm, for he is the opener (*fātiḥah*) of existence, and the opener is the sealer (*khātimah*).¹ His friendship was concealed in his prophethood, because the world of the visible conforms to the World of the Unseen, and in the World of the Unseen friendship is hidden in prophethood. His friendship will become manifest when he descends, and then his manifestations in the Unseen and the visible will coincide. He will become manifest through friendship after prophethood in himself, so it may be known that the Commander of the Faithful is the Messenger's self that became manifest through friendship. The proof of this is His words, 'and ourselves and yourselves',² so He called the Commander of the Faithful the self of Muḥammad.

1. Presumably Qumsha'ī means that Jesus, as the Spirit, is God's first creation through which all other creatures came into engendered being. Thus he is the 'opener', and by the same token he is the 'sealer', that is, the last, the one by means of whom all things rejoin God, for the alpha and omega of creation are the same.

2. Qur'ān 3:61. This phrase is from a verse that challenges a group of Christians to call God to witness concerning the truth of their claims. Muḥammad is instructed to tell them, 'Come now, let us call our sons and your sons, our wives and your wives, ourselves and your selves, then let us humbly pray and so lay God's curse upon the ones who lie.' According to the commentators, Muḥammad went before the Christians with his family—'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn—and recited these words, but they were afraid to accept the challenge.

I said that [Jesus] is the Seal of the Friends in engendered being only because his existence remains comprehensive (*jam'i*), not separative (*farqī*), and because he is a spirit, and the spirit is one of the contingent things. As for the self of the Messenger, that passed beyond the boundary of contingency, and his existence was comprehensive and divine. He alluded to this with his words, 'My satan has submitted to me.' 'So he was two-bows'-length away, or closer' (53:9). That is why 'The scholars of' his 'community are more excellent than the prophets of the children of Israel,'¹ for they fly out of the cage of contingency into the space (*faḍā'*) of necessity and Divinity (*al-lāhūt*), because their essences are annihilated in Him and they subsist through Him.

His friendship—that is, the friendship of Jesus—lacks this all-comprehensiveness, so it is not a Muḥammadan Friendship.² For he is the Seal of the general friendship of the believers and he is one of the beauties (*ḥasanāt*) of the Seal of the specific, Muḥammadan Friendship, who is the promised, awaited Mahdī. That is why [Jesus] is [the Mahdī's] follower, his helper, and the destroyer of his enemies. In the same way, Iblis and Dajjāl are among the ugly things surrounding that promised Qā'im, and 'The beauties will take away the ugly things' (11:114).

Do not be surprised at what you have heard, for the first and the last are among his manifestations and his tasks. The proof of this is their words instructing us, 'Your mention is in the mentioners, your names in the names, your bodies in the bodies, your spirits in the spirits, your souls in the souls, your traces in the traces, and your graves in the graves.'³ All are pluralized and marked with the definite article—this proves their generality (*'umūm*). Iblis is not outside of those plurals and their generality, nor is Dajjāl.

The Pole of the Gnostics, Muḥyi al-Dīn al-'Arābī [sic] said in the *Futūḥāt*,

Surely the Seal of the Friends is witness,
 though the entity of the worlds' leader is not present.
 He is the Qā'im, the Mahdī of Aḥmad's family—
 he will be the Indian blade when he exterminates.
 He is the sun that will clear away clouds and darkness,
 the downpour that is graceful and generous.⁴

So, he called him 'the worlds' leader,' and *the worlds* (*al-'ālamīn*) is a plural marked by the definite article, so it conveys generality. Jesus belongs to the worlds, and the Spirit also pertains to the worlds. Even if you read it as *the knowers* (*al-'ālimīn*), Jesus

1. A purported prophetic *ḥadīth*.

2. Ibn 'Arābī maintains, however, that 'Jesus is a Muḥammadan. That is why he will descend at the end of time. Through him God will seal the greater friendship' (*Futūḥāt*, 3: 507.4; cited in *Sufi Path*, p. 377).

3. The clauses are quoted from a long prayer to be recited in visiting the graves of the Imams (*Biḥār al-anwār* 99:132).

4. *Futūḥāt* 3: 328.5. The printed edition of the *Futūḥāt* has *al-sayyid* in place of *al-qā'im*.

and the Spirit are still included in the generality of the knowers, for they are among the knowers, or rather, [among the] the firmly-rooted (in knowledge, *al-rāsikhūn*). Thus he explicitly made him the leader of Jesus and the Spirit. So, listen with the hearing of acceptance, and 'Do not follow caprice' (4:135), for caprice will 'bring' you 'forth from the light into the darknesses', and you will be 'inhabitants of the Fire' and you will 'be there forever' (2:257).

Now that you have recognized their levels in the descent (*nuzūl*) of existence, recognize them also in its ascent (*ʿuḍ*), through their words, 'We are the preceders, the rejoiners.'¹ In other words, our ascending ipseities (*huwiyyāt*) will rejoin our preceding, descending ipseities. If you want more clarification, listen to what will be said to you:

Let us verify the reality of friendship beginning with new words. We say: Friendship is a universal, Divine reality. Like other universal, Divine realities, its property becomes manifest in all things, whether necessary or contingent, for it is an attendant of existence, roaming along with it. Just as existence has disparate degrees of perfection and deficiency, intensity and weakness, in keeping with manifestation, so also friendship has disparate degrees of perfection and deficiency, intensity and weakness, which are predicated of it and ascribed to it by way of gradation (*tashkīk*). For, [friendship] means nearness, and nothing is nearer to the things than He—exalted is He!—in the two stations of comprehension (*jamʿ*) and separation (*farq*), differentiation (*tafṣīl*) and undifferentiation (*ijmāl*). How could it not be so? For He is the same as the things in both stations. Nearness is His relation, and there is 'relation' when there are two related things. So, the Real is near to the things, and the things are near to Him.

When existence comes to rest in non-existence, its descriptions are negated and its properties are concealed, to the point that its name is stripped from it and its designation disappears. In the same way, when friendship descends to [non-existence] and ends therein, its property disappears from it and its name is stripped away from it. It is not said concerning dusky and dark things 'friends of God', nor of stones, clods of earth, disbelievers, and the depraved. In the same way, one does not say that they are 'existent things' (*mawjūdāt*).² This is because the light and attributes of existence have been subjugated, and the darkness and properties of nonexistence predominate. So, when existence comes forth from its hiding place and is illumined by the light of faith, its properties become manifest, its attributes predominate, and it comes to be described by friendship according

1. That 'Alī and the Imams are the 'preceders' (*sābiqūn*) mentioned in the Qur'ān is the topic of a small chapter in *Bihār al-anwār* (35: 332–335), but the chapter says nothing about the 'rejoiners' (*lāhiqūn*).

2. The argument clearly depends on an understanding of existence as being the same as the Real; otherwise, it is commonly said in Islamic thought that any 'thing' (*shayʿ*) is 'existent' in some respect or another; even a figment of imagination has mental existence.

to the disparity of its degrees. 'God is the friend of those who have faith; He brings them forth from the darknesses to the light' (2:257). Then existence advances and friendship is intensified, in keeping with the advances of faith, so that they reach beyond the levels of earthly souls to the levels of heavenly souls, and from there to the world of holiness; they rise up in the degrees of the holiness of the Invincibility until they reach the station of the Greatest Spirit, which is the station of Jesus, son of Mary. '... And a word that He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him' (4:171). Here the general friendship is sealed, as opposed to the specific Muḥammadan Friendship; this is the general, Muḥammadan Friendship in the station of creation and contingency.

Then existence advances and friendship intensifies beyond the level of contingency, entering into the holy sanctuary of the Divinity by transformation from contingency into necessity, and by annihilation in God and subsistence through Him, which purifies friendship from hidden, concealed *shirk*. This is the 'Clear Opening,' by which He 'forgives' him his 'former sins and the latter' (48:1–2). It is this friendship that is aimed for by the gnostics of this mercy-given community. Here the friend travels in the levels of the specific friendship and the degrees of the Godhead (*al-ulūhiyyah*) until he travels in all the Divine Names and reaches the level of all the Names; he becomes a leader (*imām*) and a point of reference (*marja'*) for all the specific and general friends. All seek shelter in him and take effusion from him. This is one of the meanings of the saying of [the eighth Imam] 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā, 'The sultan is God's shadow; everyone who is wronged (*mazlūm*) takes shelter in him.' For the Names descend from Heaven and from the friends, especially the elect among them, those who wrong (*muzlimūn*) themselves, for they annihilate (*mufnūn*) themselves in God.¹

This all-comprehensive friendship, once it is intensified, is one of His Attributes, that to which is alluded by His words, 'And He is the Friend, the Praiseworthy' (42:28). It may become manifest in the perfection of its intensity. Then it is prophethood as both knowledge-giving and Law-giving. It is thereby concealed by

1. Grammatically, *al-muzlimūn li-anfusihim* should mean 'those who darken themselves,' and this may be what Qumshā'ī means to say. The context, however, not least the parallelism with *mufnūn*, suggests that he has in mind the Qur'ān's discussion of those who wrong (*ẓālimūn*) themselves, an expression that usually denotes evildoers. Ibn 'Arabī often talks about a certain type of *ẓālimūn li-anfusihim* who are friends of God, especially on the basis of Qur'ān 35:32: 'Then We gave the Book as an inheritance to those whom We have chosen from among our servants; so, among them is the one who wrongs himself, among them is the moderate one, and among them is the foremost in good.' Such friends of God 'wrong themselves' by forbidding their own selves (*nafs*) from partaking in certain rights (*haqq*) that God has given to them, but they do so 'for the sake of themselves' (*li-ajl anfusihim*; *Futūḥāt* 2: 136.33, 532.34), that is, for the sake of the long-term welfare of their own souls. Ibn 'Arabī also explains that those who carry the Trust (*al-amānah*, Qur'ān 33:72), which is the vicegerency of God, 'wrong themselves' because the self is defined by its servanthood (*ubūdiyyah*), but they transgress its limits by undertaking vicegerency, which is an attribute of lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) rather than servanthood; this explains why the verse of the Trust calls them *ẓalūm*, 'wrongdoing' (*Futūḥāt* 2: 160.30). See also *Futūḥāt* 4: 73.11, 193.1.

prophethood, and the one who possesses it is the Seal of the Prophets, for complete manifestation is a veil, no doubt. In the same way, the Real is hidden by His extreme manifestation.

It may also descend slightly from the perfection of its intensity, a descent in which the attribute of friendship dominates over the attribute of prophethood. Then Law-giving is hidden and knowledge-giving remains, because of the descent of the name-based and engendered equilibrium of the constitution (*i'tidāl al-mizāj al-asmā'i wa'l-kawnī*).¹ This was the case with the Commander of the Faithful in relation to the Seal of the Prophets, for he knew the knowledge (*'ulūm*) of the former and the latter folk, as has been reported,² and part of that was the Laws. Thus [all-comprehensive friendship] was not robed in the robe of prophethood, but became manifest in the attributes of friendship. The one who possesses it is the Seal of the Friends, the locus of manifestation for God, the Friend, the Praiseworthy. He is the predominating friend of God 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, for he was the nearest of people to the Seal of the Prophets in the Unseen and the visible.

The author of the *Futūḥāt*, after mentioning that our Prophet was the first to become manifest in existence, says 'And the nearest of people to him was 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the leader of the world and the secret³ of all the prophets.'⁴ The *ḥadīth*

1. In traditional medicine, the health of a person's constitution (*mizāj*) is determined by the equilibrium or disequilibrium of the 'mixture' (*imtizāj*) of the four humours. In the same way, the health of the whole person, made in God's form, is established by the equilibrium of the Divine and engendered Attributes that make up the full human constitution. Qumsha'ī is employing the standard contrast between *ilāhī*, 'Divine' (that which is uncreated, e.g., the Divine Names and Attributes) and *kawnī*, 'engendered' (the created, that which derives from the engendering command, 'Be' [*kun*]).

2. The editor thinks that Qumsha'ī has this report in mind (citing it from *Bihār al-anwār*): 'When the people swore allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful as caliph, he went out to the mosque. ... Then he said, 'O people! Ask of me before you lose me, for I have the knowledge of the former and the latter folk.'

3. 'Secret' translates *sirr*, which can mean secret or mystery in the sense of a hidden knowledge, but which also commonly designates 'the secret heart', the deepest level of human consciousness. Here, however, Qumsha'ī seems to have in mind an even deeper dimension of the human reality, the uncreated, fixed entity. Ibn 'Arabī sometimes enumerates the levels of the human reality as body, soul, spirit, and divine secret (*al-sirr al-ilāhī*), the last being the same as the 'specific face' (*al-wajh al-khāṣṣ*), that is, the specific Face of God turned toward each and every existent thing, unique to that thing. This is none other than the thing's fixed entity. See *Futūḥāt*, 1: 168.20 (corresponding to the critical edition of Osman Yahia [Cairo, 1972–1992], vol. 3, p. 92); 3: 295.19, 343.22. On the specific face, see Chittick, *Self-Disclosure*, pp. 135–155.

4. The text as cited here is found in a copy of the first redaction of the *Futūḥāt* that was made within forty years of Ibn 'Arabī's death; it is noted in the apparatus to the text as published by Osman Yahia. Yahia's chosen text, however, is based on the second redaction in Ibn al-'Arabī's own hand, and reads like this: 'And the nearest of people to him was 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the secrets [*asrār*] of all the prophets' (*Futūḥāt*, 1: 119.31; Yahia, 2: 227).

scholar [Fayḍ] al-Kāshānī quotes this from him in his *Kalimāt maknūnah*.¹ I say: His words here provide evidence that in his view, as in ours, the Seal of unqualified, Divine Friendship is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, not Jesus, for three reasons:

First, [Ibn 'Arabī] says explicitly that ['Alī] was the nearest of people to him. This is unqualified, so it embraces formal (*ṣūrī*) and supraformal (*ma'nawī*) friendship, that is, that which pertains to both the visible and the Unseen realms. The superlative mode shows either that he is superior to the ones to whom he is compared, or that superiority is negated from them. In the first case, his nearness to him is greater than anyone else, and so also in the second case, for the source of unqualified friendship, as you have come to know, is the Seal of the Prophets. So, whoever is nearest to him—that is, nearer to him than anyone else—is the Seal of that friendship. The Seals are not many, so the one who is nearer to him than anyone else is not many, and his nearness to him is greater than anyone else's. Hence he is the Seal of friendship, and everyone else is below him and under his banner and takes from him. Now, among the friends is Gabriel, and 'Alī is his teacher, as is well known.² As for Jesus, he was from the inblowing (*naḥkh*) of Gabriel,³ which is why [Jesus] was 'a Spirit from Him' (4:171), so he took from [Gabriel].

Second, he says explicitly that he is the leader of the world, and Jesus is part of the world. Hence he is the leader of Jesus, and the leader has priority over the led. Hence 'Alī has priority over Jesus, so he is the Seal, not Jesus.

Third, he says explicitly that he is the secret of all the prophets, and Jesus is one of the prophets. So he is his secret, and the secret of the prophets is their friendship. Hence, through his friendship, he pervades him and the other prophets, for his friendship is the unqualified friendship that pervades all qualified things, and the qualified things are his tasks, his manifestations, and everything that is taken from him. He is the Seal, and everyone takes from him, so Jesus takes from him.

If you say that the Shaykh has said explicitly more than once that Jesus is the Seal of the Friends, I will reply that he means the Seal of the General Friendship that is contrasted with the Specific Friendship, not the General Friendship that embraces both, as I said. I will return to this, God willing.

Master Rūmī says explicitly what the Shaykh says, in these verses:
As soon as form was joined with the world, 'Alī was there;
When earth and time were painted, 'Alī was there.

1. *Kalimāt maknūnah*, 203. The printed edition of this book does not have the words 'and the secret of all the prophets', though, as we saw, the *Futūḥāt* passage does include them.

2. The editor of the text remarks that there are reports that the Imams taught the angels how to glorify and praise God and that the specification of 'Alī as the teacher of Gabriel is apparently 'among the well-known things' (*az mashhūrāt*), which is to say that he is not aware of a specific *ḥadīth* saying so.

3. Reference to the Qur'ānic accounts of Mary becoming inseminated by means of Gabriel (21:91, 66:12).

The king who was both executor and friend was 'Alī;
 the sultan of generosity, nobility, and munificence was 'Alī.
 Adam, Seth, Idris, and Job,
 Jonah, Joseph, and Hūd were 'Alī.
 Moses, Jesus, Khiḍr, and Elias,
 Ṣāliḥ the prophet and David were 'Alī.
 Jesus came into existence and spoke in the cradle—
 his speech and fluency were 'Alī.
 When the angels bowed to Adam, that was from 'Alī.
 The one to whom is bowed in Muḥammad's Ka'bah is 'Alī.
 Listen to 'Your flesh is my flesh' to know
 that the companion who was the Prophet's self was 'Alī.
 That eminent king who, on the night of the *mi'rāj*,
 was one with Aḥmad the Chosen was 'Alī.
 Those were not praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*) who did not see
 that in the road of religion Aḥmad and Maḥmūd are 'Alī.
 The meaning of the Qur'ān to which God in the whole Qur'ān
 gave the attribute of inerency and extolled was 'Alī.
 This is not unbelief, these are not words of unbelief—
 'Alī has always been, and 'Alī will always be.
 Up to the point where he says,
 The secret of both worlds, of everything apparent and hidden,
 displayed by Shams-i Tabrīzī was 'Alī.¹

These verses show that he is the Seal of the Unqualified Friendship because he is the self of God's Messenger, as shown by 'our selves,' and the secret of the prophets and messengers, and he is given priority over all of them, including Jesus. This is clear, without need for explanation.

Let us now return to our goal. We say: Next, friendship descended in its waystations within the holiness of the Divinity, then descended within the holiness of the Invincibility, and then it came to rest in the Spirit, which is the station of Jesus. Then it descended until it embraced the faithful and came to rest in them in accordance with the disparity of their degrees in faith. Jesus is the first of them and their Seal in respect of adhering to the order (*bi-i'tibār akhdh al-tartīb*). In the same way, 'Alī is the first of them all and their Seal in contradistinction (*bi-ikhtilāf*) to adhering to the order.

1. Although commonly ascribed to Rūmī, this *ghazal* is not included in the critical edition of his *Dīwān*, and few who are familiar with his style would imagine that he could have authored it. Fayḍ quotes a slightly different version, with four more verses, in his *Kalimāt maknūnah* (203–204) directly after quoting the passage from Ibn 'Arabī in praise of 'Alī that Qumsha'ī has just quoted. Unlike Qumsha'ī, however, Fayḍ does not attribute the poem to Rūmī, though the mention of Shams-i Tabrīzī implies, of course, that the poem is from his *Dīwān*.

Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Jilwah)

Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Ṭabāṭabā'ī known as 'Jilwah' (Splendour) was born in 1238/1822 in Aḥmadābād in the province of Gujarat in India and died in 1275/1896 in Tehran, where he is buried in Ibn Bābawayh cemetery. His family, who had moved from Persia to Gujarat for political reasons, moved back to Isfahan when Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Jilwah was seven years old. He studied first with his father who was a man of letters and continued his studies at Kāsah-Garān *madrasah*. It appears that Jilwah had very few teachers and mastered much of Islamic theology, philosophy and theoretical gnosis (*'irfān naẓarī*) on his own. He tells us that 'Once I realized that I did not benefit from the teachers available to me, I began to study on my own.' Despite this, it appears that he did study with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Ḥakīm, Mīrzā Ḥasan the son of Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and Muḥammad Chīnī who was a student of Ḥakīm Nūrī.¹ Jilwah was drawn to the esoteric and practical side of the Islamic philosophical tradition and his contemporaries have commented on his extreme sense of humility, piety and simple life style, although in philosophy itself he was primarily a follower of the *mashshā'ī* School.

It appears that Jilwah found the intellectual milieu in Isfahan to be quite contentious and his dispute with some of the exoteric '*ulamā*' and religious authorities contributed to his departure from Isfahan to Tehran. Once in Tehran, which had become the capital of Qajar Iran and an increasingly important centre of intellectual activity, he stayed at Dār al-Shifā' *madrasah* where he pursued his scholarly work and taught philosophy, '*irfān*', and mathematics for forty-one years. He was not a particularly prolific author but he devoted his efforts to the training of a generation of philosophers and scholars who played a major role in the revival of Ṣadrian philosophy during the last century. Among the notable students of Jilwah we can name Ḥakīm Ashkawārī, Ḥasan Kirmānshāhī, Nayrīzī Shirāzī, the author of a treatise titled *Ḥaqīqat al-wujūd* (The Reality of Being) and Mīrzā Ṭāhir Tunakābunī,

1. For more information on possible teachers of Jilwah see *Majmu'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm Jilwah*, ed. Ḥasan Riḍā-Zādah (Tehran, 1385 Sh./2006), pp. 24–31.

to mention a few. It is said that in his long career as a teacher, he trained nearly four hundred students.

In his teachings Jilwah would offer a thorough analysis of the views of previous philosophers but did not always side with any one philosopher or school. Some of his contemporaries have said that he considered himself a Peripatetic who propagated Ibn Sīnā's thought. Jilwah's remarkable teaching career was not matched in the production of original works on philosophy. To this effect he wrote, 'Once I realized that writing a treatise on a new frontier was difficult, if not impossible, I did not write any independent work. I did, however write, extensive glosses on the *Ḥikmah muta'āliyah* known as *Asfār*.' This may have been because the works of Ibn Sīnā, whom he considered to be the benchmark for philosophical intellection, were for him so original and comprehensive that he did not see the need to write independent works on philosophy. This view also caused him to be critical of Mullā Ṣadrā against whom he wrote a treatise.

Jilwah's interest in Ibn Sīnā and his school of thought was so strong that he did not attach much significance to later philosophical figures. S. J. Ashtiyānī, a preeminent contemporary Muslim philosopher who was critical of Jilwah, argued that the latter did not understand the intricacies of Mullā Ṣadrā's transcendent philosophy while others have commented that Jilwah saw the later Islamic philosophy from the perspective of Ibn Sīnā and Peripatetics and so rejected its exponents.

To date, twelve of Jilwah's works have been published in critical editions, including *Risālah-yi kullī wa aqsām-i ān* (Treatise on the Universal and its Types), *Rabṭ-i ḥādith bi qadīm* (The Relationship Between Createdness and Eternity), *Ḥāshiyah bar mashā'ir-i Mullā Ṣadrā* (Glossary upon Mullā Ṣadrā's *Metaphysical Penetrations*), and *Dīwān*, a collection of poems. There are also ten other works consisting of unpublished commentaries and glosses, some merely attributed to him.

Jilwah's works represent some of the best examples of later Islamic philosophical literature and show the continuity, both in form and content of a living philosophical tradition in Persia. In many ways, Jilwah kept the torch of Avicennan philosophy alive while giving it a Shi'i-gnostic flavour thereby reconciling theoretical and practical aspects of philosophy.

In this chapter we bring to light for the first time a translation of *Rasā'il falsafiyyah* (Philosophical Epistles) in which Ḥakīm Jilwah comments on a variety of traditional topics in metaphysics especially causality, quiddity and the question of existence. He also offers a discourse concerning the affirmation of the existence of archetypal forms in bodies, and that they are substances, as well as how a single concept is derivable from distinct realities. Throughout his writings, Jilwah makes extensive reference to previous philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā, making his work particularly important from the perspective of the history of Islamic philosophy.

M. Aminrazavi

PHILOSOPHICAL EPISTLES

Rasā'il falsafiyyah

Translated for this volume by Nader El-Bizri from Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Jilwāh, *Majmu'a-yi āthār-i ḥakīm Jilwāh*, ed. Ḥasan Riḍā-Zādah (Tehran, 1385 Sh./2006), pp. 583–608.

Chapter One

[1]

Know that the two aspects and the two accounts that the philosophers affirmed with respect to the intellect, both consist of two real dimensions; namely: existence, and its definition which, by convention, is quiddity; since what is other than existence is essence. However, existence is the origin, insofar as this existence is bound by definition and determinateness, in such a way that the binding is internal [with respect to it], while what binds is external, and, through God's Potency, is also the cause of the noblest contingent, which is the second Intellect. If the consideration of this binding [connection] is suspended, then the origin would be of the nature of Absolute Being, which would not be a cause of what is [concretely] determined, or of bound existence, by way of entering into a connection [with it], it is rather the cause of the more specific contingent, which is the first delimited celestial sphere.

Based on this, the causality, which is implied by limitation as a [mode of] privation, and by the affirmation of the immovable determinate beings by way of the Necessary [Being], is not necessitated, as suggested by some of the verifying inquirers. This does not compromise the application of the principle: that, only a singularity emanates from the One, since the [immovable] determinate entities constitute idealities and notions that are derived from [the Necessary], which do not become constituted unless the origin has multiple real aspects.

If a cause, like the Intellect, were to be a single individual, even if it contained dual aspects, it would not become two entities. The same applies to its effect, which would be a single entity comprising two ranks. One rank is higher and nobler than the other, which is the second Intellect; while at a lower rank the other is the enveloping and delimiting celestial sphere—consequently, that which encompasses two ranks does not become two entities.

[2]

Know that Shaykh al-Ishrāq [Suhrawardī] stated that the soul and what is beyond it consist of pure light, while what is other than [both] is mere darkness. It is perhaps the case that what he intended by this is that the soul and what is higher than it consist of

existence per se, and [that] quiddity is neither the same as its being nor is it a part of its existence; what is other than those is quiddity. For, in some of his writings, he noted that: 'the soul and what is beyond it are pure existents,'¹ meaning that the existence of the soul and of what is beyond it is not twofold, that it does not consist of two [modes] of existing, like it is with the "body", as per the style of the Peripatetics.² In other words, [the soul and what is beyond it] consist of pure causation; not as it is proclaimed, that the soul [and what is beyond it] constitute longitudinal and latitudinal² intellects, which are real and simple like the Necessary [Being]. So, the contingent cannot but be of the rank of what is finite and it is ascertained and accepted that the contingent consists of a composite pair [matter and form].

[3]

Know that five propositions apply to the mathematical object: firstly, that it is the same as the physical body, following the claims of the advocates of Stoicism; secondly, that it is a continuous accidental entity, according to which the three-dimensions can be postulated by way of crisscrossing patterns; and its continuity is other than that of the extended substance. Hence, such an object carries two continuous aspects, one as a substantial form, and the other as an accidental attribute; thirdly, that it is continuous due to itself, and the extendedness of the physical body would apply to it accidentally; fourthly, that it consists of the set of the three bodily dimensions: length, width, and depth; fifthly, that continuity in a given body is one, and that it is attributed to the bodily form in essence, and to its magnitude by accident. To elucidate this: a body does not have but a single extension following the three dimensions. If that extended entity is considered from the standpoint of its three dimensions in an absolute manner, without specifying its extendedness by way of a determinate measure, or by positing its magnitude—namely, that it is determined in its substantial essence by way of them in terms of magnitude—then, based on this account, it would be a bodily form and a substance. Yet, if it were considered as being determined according to a given outward determinateness, it would not then be a mathematical object.

The one who upholds this thesis offers two instances in support of it. Firstly, this requires that the mathematical object would not be an accident, but rather a composite of substance and accident. And this necessitates, in its turn, that it would be a single quiddity composed of two notions. Secondly, how, based on this measure, would the mathematical object be accidental with respect to the physical body?

In response to the first [claim]: the notion of a physical body is that of an extended entity whose extension is determinate, rather than conceiving the extended entity as being a substance as such. And, in reply to the second question:

1. Namely, that they are modalities of 'thatness' (*anniyah*).

2. Namely, that they are mono-dimensional, as well as existing on the same plane of existence in two distinct directions.

the accidentality [of the mathematical object] is not an external accidentality, but is rather analytic; as, for example, it is the case with mind-dependent postulations.

[4]

Question: How does the existence of concrete determinate entities (*a'yān*), along with their beingness (*mawjūdiyyatuhā*), belong to the Being of the First Truth, and how do they derive from all its dimensions and aspects?

Reply: Know that the manifest appearing of notions, determinate concepts, and quiddities is not due to themselves, in any mode of constitution, or under any manner of accounting for them, but is rather due to Being and its association with its own [originary] primordiality. If a rank in existence reveals a certain concept amongst the notions, and thus posits another beingness that is [existentially] more intense and stronger than itself, it would undoubtedly be the case that this intense beingness is also revelatory of that concept; since it already brings about the existence of the rank that revealed this posited concept.

This progresses until the intensification of being reaches such a rank that no other rank can be conceived as being higher than it; as is the case with the Necessary, Be He Exalted. Based on this account, the Necessary, as the Begetter of all existents, in the noblest way, would be Revelatory by way of gathering all the notions and the quiddities that are derived from all the ranks of dispersed contingents; absolutely without necessitating Its own un-concealment. So, being gets individuated by way of what is revealed through it and that individuation is conditioned by the issuing forth, from existence, a sign from what is necessitated by a given quiddity.

Consider allocation (*logos*; *nutqīyyah*) and the levels of its perfectibility; since at a given rank it specifically reveals the vegetative state, and constitutes an individuating of plants, while it actualizes the principle of individuation. At another rank that is above it, it reveals the vegetative and animal states; but the [resulting] individual is that of the animal rather than that of the plant, and its manifestation is within the domain of plants too. Since the signs of vegetation are not only their order in terms of it per se, but, that the animal status contains vegetation; and this proceeds, step by step until unity with God.

The beingness of the immovable, concrete determinations of the Being of the True One consists, in itself, of its un-concealment by the Necessary, which does not contradict the simplicity of the Necessary for which it appears, rather it affirms it, as you well know.

[5]

Question: How does the generation of beings and the generation of their revelation come about from the realm of concealment¹ to that of un-concealment?²

Reply: Know that the generation of existents and their revelation from the domain of absolute concealment unto that of un-concealment is due to the beingness of the quiddities and the determinate concrete entities in their intrinsic modes of existing, which entail signs that are specific to them. And, 'generation happens' by way of the emanation of a finite existence, which reveals the determinate [being] whose determinateness issues forth from nothing. And, emanating from nothing is called 'creativity', which is a requisite of the Intense Perfect Being that gathers all the possible perfections; and creation is one of these possible perfections.

[6]

Question: Why did you waste your life in the study of philosophy, which does not pertain to the Religious Law, and is not required, even if it is, perhaps, not even harmful?

Reply: Know that the eminence of the sciences rests on the exaltedness of their topics; and, undoubtedly, the subject matter of philosophy is the Essence of the Necessary [Being], His Attributes, His Actions, and other associated themes that are mentionable in this regard. Hence, philosophy would be the noblest amongst the sciences, and, in general, knowing the fundamentals of faith is nobler than having knowledge of the branches of the sciences.

If you say that a general knowledge of the fundamentals of faith is sufficient in such a way that does not require the study of the familiar exactitudes as these that were undertaken by the philosophers, I say that if a certain science amongst the sciences is nobler than the others, then the particulars of that science would undoubtedly be more dignified than its generalities; given that particularisation is more complete than generalisation. Thus, a discourse about sufficiency is unlike that concerning nobleness.

I say in response to this that it is sufficient to follow the established tradition, with respect to the study of the corollaries of the sciences, and that one's own life need not be spent in acquiring it according to this suggested manner. This is especially the case with respect to the derivation of distinctions that rarely occur, and of valuable extant postulations.

If you say that there must be someone who specialises in the branches of the sciences, so that people could consult him with reference to sought after questions, I say that there must also be a sage to whom those who are perplexed

1. Literally: 'absence'.

2. Literally: 'attestation' *qua* 'testament'.

refer regarding contended matters of belief like: the assimilation of the [Divine] Attributes to the [Divine] Essence, or the falsity of prioritising an equivalent over another without there being a preponderant for such prioritisation; and many other such problems. Moreover, in view of refuting the claims of the denouncers of the faith from the dissident sects, who are the Demons of the world, should they cast doubts and endeavour to maintain them, the need [for such a sage] is more necessary and more pressing than [wanting] the former individual (the specialist in the branches of the sciences); since, not having the former (the specialist in the branches of the sciences) results in a loss of [scientific] efforts and of the corollaries of the sciences, while, by losing the latter [sage] beliefs are lost, and the fundamentals of faith are concealed.

The loss of beliefs and of the fundamentals of faith, as well as their concealment, is undoubtedly worse than losing [scientific] efforts and the corollaries of the sciences. Based on this, the necessity of acquiring this [philosophical] knowledge is apparent, and your statement that 'it is not required' is nonsensical.

If you say that delving into the study of the fundamentals of faith and inquiring about them might perhaps lead to false beliefs that result in disbelief, I reply that this possibility arises equally with regard to the subsidiaries of the sciences; since judging contrarily to what was revealed by God results necessarily in infidelity.

If you say that error in the auxiliaries [of the sciences], after exercising meticulous effort, is forgivable since the errant is answerable only after verification, I ask what is the difference between them? Have you not heard that some jurists, May God favour them! held that: 'a charge of infidelity based on an objectionable action is doubtful'? Even concerning someone who is infamous for his disbelief, it was said that the intellect judges that if a person exercised his effort disinterestedly, endeavoured to acquire beliefs following correct intellectual rules, and that his effort and pursuit resulted in something, then he has to believe in that thing, even if it would conflict with concrete reality, and so a necessitating justice determines that he ought to be forgiven. Yes! It might well be the case that the preservation of the Religious Law necessitates an absolute charging of this individual with apostasy, as it is known. [And yet] if he reveals his belief that differs from what is required [by the Law], then, in terms of the concrete reality, his case should not result in punishment, but rather be understandable.

If you grasped this, then know that if the soul does not have knowledge of real entities, then it would not have a given rank in the Afterlife, since knowledge is the soul's nourishment and an aspect of its essence. It is also what stays with it and the knowledge of corruptible entities, which are connected with the [soul's] genesis, does not remain with it. The human being has to dedicate his own life in acquiring this knowledge. And it is not enough to know by way of generality, which is a station befitting commoners and the [intellectually] weak. He rather has to have sincerity of intent and be purified from corrupt interests, and then he

must be oriented towards the sacred realm that is derived from the Lawgiver and its Affirmer; Thousands of Greetings and Praises upon Him! Beseeching God to unveil to him the meanings of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, along with the secrets of the realm of concealment, of Testament, the truths of the fundamentals of faith, and the judgments of their subsidiaries, until he becomes a gatherer of what is intelligible and of [what is] handed down over through the authority of tradition! Since, it is impermissible for the fair seeker [of knowledge] to refute wisdom and the fundamentals of faith, or jurisprudence and the auxiliaries of religion, he must rather seek their acquisition in order to succeed. *Finis*

[7]

[Based] on the claim of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā) in *al-Asfār [al-arba'ah]* (The Four Intellectual Journeys),¹ regarding general topics in a chapter on the demonstration of the copulative [mode of] being, he says; 'the meaning of the copula is none other than the realisation of a thing in-itself; yet, insofar that it is in something other, or pertaining to it, or with it, and not being for itself; like the being that is solely constituted by itself; this is following our philosophy, and the whole creative variations in the renowned philosophical tradition, et cetera.'

He intended by 'in itself' that it is not of the order of the copulas of affirmative predications that are at the root of literal meanings. Since there is no contradiction between counting all contingents as being included within this division and his saying 'insofar that' they are not existential modes of being in themselves, but rather that it is a mere copula; given that its modes of being are not at the root of meanings, even if they were copulas or [consisted of] an Illuminist relation.

The aim behind his saying: 'or pertaining to it' is that the existence of a thing is due to something other than itself, in such a way that it has no aspect other than that of its copulative link with that thing; like the existence of the effect for a cause, according to the author [Mullā Ṣadrā]. Consequently, it would not have an opposing [counterpart] except existence per se; namely the existent in itself, insofar that it is in something, or pertains to it, or is with it; with the exception of the Necessary [Being], following the opinion of the author [Mullā Ṣadrā]. So what is other than the Necessary would consist in its entirety of being for the Necessary, and, on his view (Mullā Ṣadrā's), is a mere copula. As for the opinion of those other than him, what figures as an opposite, with respect to this existence, is the response [to this inquiry], and the wholeness of creational differentials; be it an intellect, or a soul, given that it would not be a state in something, that it is apparent, and that it is not of the sense that has been mentioned. So, it would have within itself an aspect that is other than the copulative connection, based on the style of those other than the

1. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah* (Tehran, 1360 Sh./1981), vol. 1, p. 80.

author [Mullā Ṣadrā]. I have nothing in my possession [to add]; for what is intended by 'possessing' is the presencing of the form of the knowable accidentality of the world, while that which is other than creatures is encompassed by the copulative relation, following this sense. As for the accident, its inherence in its subject is in something and the corporeal form that in reality is the body, while matter is what sustains the body, is not itself refracted in the body as verified. Regarding matter itself, it does not have an existence in actuality, and it would not enter in what is apportioned, since the apportioned exists in actuality. *Finis*

[8]

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā) mentioned in *al-Asfār [al-arba'ah]*, in a section of miscellanea on the common notions, within a chapter dedicated to the definition of necessity and contingency:

He who deeply delves into what the logicians mentioned in the Book of Demonstration (*Kitāb al-Burhān*) [notices] that designation and demonstration are co-entangled in definitions, and that the middle term in demonstration is in itself the consequent which is the differentia in definition. The First Teacher [Aristotle] showed in the *Theology* what the necessary is, and why it is in many things as one by definition. And [this] constitutes a subtle [yet] ambivalent hint, but it is rather clear with respect to what we have noted.¹

I say that the intention of the logicians [behind this] is that the constituents of demonstration consist of [sets of] 'why' [questions], [and] not of responses [of the sort of] 'this [or that];' given that 'demonstration,' following the conventions of the 'sages,' is the demonstration of the 'why' [question], even if it were considered, through the norms of others, as being more general in scope, [like] the four causes, which are themselves [constituents] of the perfect definition. So, if an existent were to be defined, [its definition] designates its existent quiddity and not a mere quiddity per se. It is insufficient to know it by way of knowing its components, but rather all its remaining reasons ought to be gathered in order that a complete knowledge of it can be accomplished.

As al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs [Ibn Sīnā] held in the 'Treatise on Demonstration' in his [Book of] Healing (*al-Shifā'*):

If there were amongst the definitions, that whose relation to all the causes is self-derived, then all of these [causes] ought to be included in its definition, though, these causes must be incorporated within its differentia and not its genus, given that these causes are indubitably those of a specific thing, and the existence of that thing requires their existence, with which it is realised, obtained, and specified.

1. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*, vol. 1, pp. 87–88. The composition of the text of the *Theology* is associated with Porphyry, and yet assimilated in the history of ideas in Islam into Aristotle's corpus.

These will be like the causes that bring about the essence of what has a realised and specified existence, and of that which has a dispersed being that is not specified according to any given specificity that renders it obtainable. [If] that matter were specified by these [causes], then it would be genera and the causes would be differential (*qua* pertaining to the differentia). Like when you say that the sword is an artificial instrument, or a weapon made out of steel, [which is] lengthy, having a width, with sharp extremities, in order to cut the limbs of the animal in battle. The instrument is a genus, and the artifice is a differentia from the originating mover, and '[made] from steel' is a differentia of the subject, while '[being] lengthy, having width and sharpness' is a differentia of the form, and 'to cut the limbs of the animal' is a differentia of the *telos*.

If someone says that the definition designates the substance of a thing and its essence; then, how would the reasons that are external to it be included in it? The reply would be that the reasons behind a thing are rather incorporated in its definition, since its substance is connected with these reasons. So, its relation with them is essential to it in its substance. If one of the reasons that are external to [that] thing were as such, then, the state of its substance could not be known, nor could its reasons be recalled. He [that inquirer] ought to tell the truth, and for us to know that the definition of a thing is by way of its quiddity, [that] it is accomplished via the components of its constitution and not [by] what is external to them, and that it is achieved through its 'thingness' like all the causes, in order that its quiddity is conceived as it is. This is realised by way of what is anterior to its quiddity in being, so that its existence is realised by it, and its quiddity occurs through it.¹ *Finis*

If a thing were the same as its 'being realised', like existence, in such a way that it does not have the reasons of constitution such as matter [and] form; but rather that its reasons were restricted to the effective and teleological [agencies], then its definition would be through them, and the effective and teleological [agents] would be one in existence; namely as the Necessary. Thus the Existence of the Necessary is the perfect definition; as for all existents, the negation of the demonstration results absolutely in a subsidiary negation of definition. This [proposition] comes to pass in most of the writings of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā) on Absolute Being, and it is correct in its specifics, and does not require extensive hermeneutics.

This is apparent in the discourse of al-Shaykh al-Ra'is [Ibn Sīnā] in his saying: 'these causes ought to be of the order of its species and not of the order of its genus.' Moreover, [it is apparent] in the intended meaning behind the [aforementioned] proposition: 'the middle term in demonstration is itself the consequent that is the differentia in definition.' This is because what is intended from definition is a

1. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā'*, *al-fann al-khāmis min al-mantiq fi'l-burhān*, ed. Abu'l 'Alā 'Afīfī (Cairo, 1375/1955), pp. 299–300.

perfect definition of an existent thing in terms of its 'thingness'. Undoubtedly, such a definition is that of causes in the domain of differentia. If a thing has no reasons other than the effective and teleological [agents], as [is the case] with being, then they are solely of the order of differentia, and more so, they are of an existence whose definition is perfected, given that it would not have a genus. This proposition of the logicians is like its antecedent, [for] it shows that the perfect definition, with respect to existents, is that of the Necessary; 'May His Consequence Be Exalted!'

As for the statement of the First Teacher [Aristotle] that 'the Necessary in "what it is" and "why it is", is one in many things'. We say that what may be grasped of this proposition is that he allows for the teleological and efficient [agents] to be the same as the perfect reality of a thing, since the 'why' [question] designates an inquiry about the *telos* and the efficient [agent], while the 'what' is a question pertaining to the complete reality, that of definition. This undoubtedly befits a more contingent being, since [the Necessary] has a simple reality without genus, species, matter, or form; and there is no in-between separation between its *telos* and its efficient [agency]. As our authorities (Peace be upon them) mentioned, 'His Unity is His Distinction from His creatures, the judgment of distinctness consists of the in-between attribute rather than separation; it has no reality except through its relation with its Maker.' For the cause is the complete definition of the effect, while the effect is a deficient definition of the cause, given that the cause is one for the perfections of the effect, as an existence of a loftier type. The effect evokes the perfections of the causes in a subtle mode. The definition is of the order of perfection with regard to what is defined, and the defined consists of an aspect of deficiency with respect to the definition and its encompassment.

It is not unlikely that what he [Aristotle] intended with reference to many things concerning this matter is being; since it is the origin that quiddity follows from, whilst being at a lesser rank relative to it.¹ *Finis*

Chapter Two

Discourse Concerning the Affirmation of the Existence of Archetypal Forms in Bodies, and that they are Substances

Know that the corporeal forms cannot be realised or become constituted according to the essence externally, except by way of specific substantial forms. Since the presupposition that their outward existence has been denuded from the specific substantial forms, and is possibly realisable without these forms would entail, they

1. [It is noted at the conclusion of this chapter that]: 'This epistle has been completed with rapidity and haste (*bi'l-sur'ah wa'l-'ajālah*) in a state of weariness and indolence (*al-kilāl wa'l-kasālah*), [copied] by the hand of the humblest amongst the seekers: Muḥammad 'Alī. [Dated] the first day of the month of: *Dhu'l-qī'dah al-ḥarām* 1332/[1913]; the affiliate of the School of *Sipahsālār* (Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Qājār).'

will indubitably be positioned in a precise locality and in an identifiable place within the cavity of the celestial sphere, placed comparably with the accidents of what is defined in magnitude, or what is other. So this place and occupied space, along with the specified accidents, will be necessitated by [the corporeal forms] themselves. This requires that this apply to all bodies, whether these specified accidents were celestial or elemental, and this is not the case.

If you say that they will not occupy a space or have a specific place that is determined within that cavity, but that the absolute body, denuded of specifications, is realised externally in such a way that it fills the wholeness of that cavity, filling the entirety of that space, in a manner such that nothing within that space will be unfilled by it. That accident occurred in it in terms of the motion of the celestial bodies, and in the nearness and farness of its postulated parts, with respect to the celestial bodies. These designate what is called the fiery, airy, aqueous, and earthly forms, as held by some of the Ancients.

I say that filling occupier undoubtedly also has a place, a magnitude, and other accidents; and, despite these being sustained by itself, it would still entail that the celestial spheres, which share in corporeity with that filling occupant, would have to carry these accidents too.

If you say that the origins of this magnitude with respect to the filling occupier are not from itself, but rather that the spatiality within the cavity determines that magnitude; [because] if that space were more spacious than this, [then] the magnitude of the body would be larger than it is. I say that its occurrence, in that place or space, is due to its nature or by way of forcibleness. If it were [as such] due to its nature, it would necessitate that the celestial sphere, which partakes in corporeity, would always have the same reality as it does in enforced places. If it were by [way of] forcibleness, it would entail that this body would always be in the enforced place, and forcibility would neither be perpetual nor predominant. We wonder, moreover, how would the magnitude and the occupied space of the celestial sphere that surrounds the whole be determinate? And how does it acquire the specific form it has with its shared corporeity?

If you say that we accept that the specifiers of the celestial sphere, and all celestial spheres themselves consist of substances; we do not acquiesce to other than that. For I say, given that corporeity is a single reality that applies to all [bodies], if it needed in itself and in its reality a self-constitutor, then this would be required with respect to all of them. Yet, when it does not require in itself [such] a self-shaper, it is then implied that the specifications of the celestial spheres would be accidents. However, specified accidents do not occur in the common place unless through a specified readiness, and the happening of [such] aptitude. Its occurrence depends on having that which is readied prior to the actualisation of this happening; and that readiness [obtains] in a specified place and occupied space, comparable to the specified accidents. This occurs according to preliminaries that are external in their

readiness, with respect to these specifications, and with respect to the postulated specifics. So, should we shift our discussion towards these accidents that occur prior to the occurrence of this readiness, or to the happening of these posited specifications, whether they are essential to it, as would be entailed by its essence, or happening due to what is external to them?

Both [claims] are false. The first entails that all bodies are comparable to these specified accidents. As for the second, if we do not have reasons herewith that lead to readiness, given that the reasons for the presencing of such capacity are due to the motions of the celestial spheres, and the planetary radiation, while what is aimed at by this conversation herein is the presence of the form of the celestial spheres; then from where did [this] readiness come to be?

Know also that if the specifiers were substances, and these were the origin of emanation and realisation, and effused from the Higher Principles by way of Creativity and as a consequence of the modes of readiness, and that each one of them would have a specific place, a specific magnitude, and specific accidents, which are necessitated with respect to itself; then it happens due to the motions of the celestial spheres and planetary irradiation within the species that are receptive of composition, generation, and corruption, along with the various modes of readiness and ingenious admixtures. [And] then, when these nativities occur, the aforementioned polemics are not ultimately obligatory.

Chapter Three

Discourse on How a Single Concept is Derivable from Distinct Realities

Know that since it has been affirmed that the Necessity of Being must be essential with respect to what posited the Necessary Existent, it cannot be said that the Necessity of Being is necessitated subsequently in terms of the Essence, with reference to what posited the Necessary Existent.

If two necessary existents were posited, then the Necessity of Being, according to the Essence, ought to be derived in terms of the rank of the Essence with respect to both of them. This requires a commonality to be shared between them and it involves a feature of differentiation as well, which results in a composition that contradicts the Necessity of Being.

Given that a single property cannot be derived from distinct realities that originally have no commonality, it cannot be said that both essences differ by way of the perfection of the essence, and yet, a single conception is derivable from both according to their essence. However, it has not been affirmed that what is derived must be essential with respect to that from which it has been derived; as in the case of the notion of existence. A single concept can be derived with respect to distinct realities, [even if] they do not in principle share a single essential notion. It is thus possible to say that the notion of existence can be a subsequent entailment of

what affirms it, since there is no proof that the concept of existence is principally essential, following any convention whatever.

If you then say that if the concept of existence is not derived from the essences of existents, then it must be derived from them by way of considering the property of an aspect that is other than their essences, and it is not so, given that there is not herein a property of an aspect other than their essences from which [the concept of existence] would be derived. Then I say it may perhaps be the case that its derivation from them would be in terms of their partaking in a negative meaning. For example, both of them do not consist of privation. And, having a negative sense in common does not require sharing in the essential mode of existing. It is like partaking in human-beingness and heifer-ness in the sense of not being a horse, while not having in common a mode of existing that is specific to both of them.

If you then inquire, 'why did the Peripatetics say that the notion of existence is shared by realities that differ in essence in terms of its meaning; like the necessary and the contingent?' For, if the Existence of the Necessary differs with respect to the existence of contingents by way of the perfection of its Essence, then how would a single concept derive from them? Then I would say that an aspect of commonality lies between them. Nevertheless, this shared feature does not entail an essential sharing; like, for example, both sharing in [the mode of] non-privation; or being the two origins of the same sign, given that each one of them is the principle of the sign. It is similar to all the quiddities that differ in reality, while sharing the property of contingency. So that, even if the quiddities differed in reality, they can [still] partake in a shared negative property that is that of necessitating either existence or privation. It is the same with the variegated species, which all have in common the obtained specific genus. This commonality does not necessitate sharing in essence, et cetera, with the like of such accounts.

Know that if the meaning of the 'communal' were extracted and derived from the truthful in itself, and if essences were discussed with respect to it in essence, then this would, consequently, necessitate that these essences share a reality and a quiddity, in order that there would be a source for deriving that common meaning. Therefore, it cannot be the case that these essences differ.

Šadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Šadrā) noted, with reference to the common notions in his *al-Asfār [al-arba'ah]*, in the division that is befittingly titled, 'A chapter on [showing] that: the Necessary Existent is One,' and in the context of his discourse on 'stoning the devil':

It is not possible that realities, which differ in their essences, and [are] distinguished from one another by virtue of their meanings, would not then partake in principle in [what is] essential. My suspicion is that he whomsoever has a sane innate disposition, in terms of being natively constituted by it, in safety from maladies that may alter its integrity, would consequently judge that distinct things, insofar that they differ without there being an aspect that re-gathers them in togetherness,

would not have a single judgment that is affirmed with respect to all of them, and so it would be conversed about them [distinct things] by way of it.¹

If you then say that the general common accidental aspect that is shared ought to have an essential derivational source that is sharable; why else did accidentality accidentally occur with respect to these specified accidentals only? Then I say that it is plausible that the accidental occurrence of this accident is conditional, provided that this conditioning is not other than these accidentals. For example, the accidental happening of contingency, in terms of being conditioned by its accidentality, is not necessary. These accidentals are all one with respect to this conditioning; that is, they are not necessary. Hence, these accidentals share this property [not being necessary]; and this negating sense has no cause other than the essence of each of them. According to this sense, this negative aspect would not be essential by way of a logical essentiality, but rather by way of signifying that it has no cause other than essence. Thus, there should not be an origination via an essential commonality for the general accident; namely that of a logical essentiality. It is plausible that a general nature is causable by numerous causes.

There is no contradiction between what Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā) noted in repelling the doubts of Ibn Kammūnah, as we recounted with respect to some of his propositions, and what he said regarding the common notions in his *al-Asfār [al-arba'ah]*,² in a chapter entitled: 'Does the single effect rest on several causes?' [He wrote therein]: 'it is correct to admit the reference of the single genetic [notion] to multiplicity; like heat, whereby one of its particulars occurs by way of motion, another via irradiation, and yet another because of meeting fire. Many things may partake in a single requisite; and what is accordingly are necessitating causes of what is necessitated. [Yet] how [is this the case] when the natures of genera consist of requisites that are external to the species? Rather the genus is constituted in its being by way of a dividing differentia. Such is the case of contingency with reference to contingents that differ in their quiddities, in the [binary] coupling with respect to four and six, which are two kinds of numbers, and regarding what is other of the ranks of odd numbers. [That is] how [that is so] concerning the differentiation within a single judgment that is accidentally shared amongst different entities; and each accidental is causable by its accidentalities. Undoubtedly, different causes ought to have in common a general description, which would be that of the aspect of the dependency of that effect on them. [Yet], this is not straightforward, as this refers us to that common aspect. If its necessitation did not refer to another common feature, then that would be what is sought; otherwise, this would result in a series of dimensions of commonalities.'³

1. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*, vol. 1, p. 133.

2. Ibid. vol. 2, p. 209.

3. Ibid. pp. 211–212.

If you then say that either the effect does not need a specific cause in its quiddity, and hence, its dependency on a cause other than itself is impossible, or, if it were not deficient in its quiddity in that regard, then it is independent by itself; and that which needs nothing other than itself has no cause. Then I say, the effect, with reference to itself, lacks a cause *per se* and not a specific cause as such. However, its dependence on a definite cause is not a matter that pertains to that cause. So the essence of the cause is as it is itself *qua* itself; that is, it entails that effect, while the absolute deficiency pertains to the domain of the effect, and the specification of the cause pertains to it.¹ Rather we noted that there is no contradiction between those statements, given that the essential commonality is a requisite so that the essences themselves are accounted for in terms of it. The meaning is shared, this is indicative of their essences and is known to belong to their essences, if it were not the case, it would not be required.

Know that He knows the unification of things, and the external realities, as well as their differentiation by way of unification and by way of the characteristics, along with their signs and distinctions. If multiple things were unified in all the characteristics and signs, and they did not have characteristics or traces that were specific to them, then it is known that they would be unified in reality and in essence. If that were not the case, if they were distinguishable from one another by way of all the characteristics and signs, or they were differentiated with reference to some while having others in common, then it is known that they would not be unified in terms of reality and essence; but that they are distinct by way of the perfection of essence, or differentiated in terms of one aspect and unified according to another.

Then, know that, following the affirmation of the Necessary Existent, and the assertion that the Necessity of Being is what is entrusted with the realisation of things, as well as being their origin, [this] cannot be a random matter or an accident external to what has been posited as being necessary. Otherwise, it entails that what has been posited as being necessary is not necessary in its own rank. Then, there cannot be in existence two necessities because, if two necessary [existents] were to be posited, each one of them ought to have all the characteristics and signs that pertain to the necessity of being; this is what al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs [Ibn Sīnā] noted in the sixth chapter of his 'First Discourse' in the 'Metaphysics' of his [Book of] Healing (*al-Shifā*).² Otherwise, they would not be two necessary [existents], and this entails that they share an essence according to a single reality; given that the unification of characteristics and signs reveals a union of reality and results in a composition of what is shared. What bears distinction as well as composition contradicts the necessity of being. It cannot be said that they are distinct by way of the perfection of the essence, even though they are necessary due to the essence, and [that], in principle, they do not have

1. Ibid.

2. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā*, ed. Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Tehran, 1363 Sh./1984), p. 37.

a commonality according to the essence. Nonetheless, it is not impossible that different and distinct realities may have a single necessitation which is external to their truth; as the Peripatetics held. [They claimed] that: existents that have distinct realities would have a single requirement that is external to their truth, that being the concept of being, and so a notion would be semantically shared amongst them, despite their distinction in reality and essence; as per their [the Peripatetics] view.

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Abbreviations

EIR	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>

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